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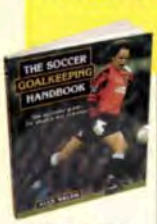

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MAY 2000
VOL.40 NO.8

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Editor Gavin Hamilton
Art Editor Gary Payne
Production Editor Peter Neish
Picture Editor Duncan Bond
Online Editor Jamie Rainbow
Editorial Secretary June Hiscock
Pictures Empics, Allsport, Popperfoto

Thanks this issue to:
David Prole, Mike Hughes, David Rallis

Editorial
King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS
Tel: 00 44 (0) 20 7261 5737
Fax: 00 44 (0) 20 7261 7474
E-mail: world_soccer@ipc.co.uk

Advertising Keamus Setna
Marketing Terry McManus
Production Manager Tom Jennings
Managing Director Andy McDuff
Publisher Sean Singleton

Display Ads 00 44 (0) 20 7261 5499
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International licensing enquiries
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ABC Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations

SUBSCRIPTION HOTLINE
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES/ INFORMATION
Annual subscription is for 12 months (13 issues, prices include postage) UK: £32.50.
Europe/Eire (inc. VAT): £40 (airmail).
USA: £48 (airmail).
Australia, Far East Asia: £54 (airmail).
Rest of World: £50 (airmail).
Surface Worldwide: £35 (airmail).

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EUROPEAN SPORTS MAGAZINES
A Bola (Portugal), don balon (Spain), Foot (Belgium), Kicker (Germany), Gazzetta dello Sport (Italy), France Football (France), Voetbal International (Holland), WORLD SOCCER (UK)

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May 2000

THIS month we turn the spotlight on some of the more unlikely heroes of the European game. Luis Figo is captain of Champions League favourites Barcelona and a leading light in an exciting Portuguese national side. Yet he remains one of the most under-rated players in European football. Find out why on page 24.

Alessandro Nesta, Jens Jeremies and Radek Bejbl (pages 28, 30 and 32 respectively) tend to get overlooked in the rush to celebrate their more newsworthy team-mates. But they will all play crucial roles for their respective countries at Euro 2000. However, none of their stories compares to that of Yves Vanderhaeghe (page 30), who was given a five per cent chance of survival after being struck down by a brain tumour at the age of 18.

You can read more about Vanderhaeghe, as well as all the latest Euro 2000 news, when you visit our new website, www.worldsoccer.com. It's an exciting development for everyone at *World Soccer* and you'll be hearing a lot more about it over the coming months.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor (gavin_hamilton@ipc.co.uk)

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COMMENTARY

'Cheating is becoming endemic and referees are incapable of recognising it'

Diving into dispute

IT'S NOT just the divers out on the pitch who are undermining the sense of sportsmanship and fair play on which soccer's spirit depends. The TV pundits and even the VICTIMS are succumbing as well.

That is bad news for FIFA more than a decade after the world governing body launched its assortment of fair play prizes.

We all know exactly how cowardly coaches – who see the referee's every error yet not their own centre-forward's flailing fist or elbow – use the officials as scapegoats for their own failures. We all know how administrators hide behind the excuse of 'commercial pressure'.

Sir Stanley Matthews' death brought the issue of sportsmanship back into prime-time focus; but the overwhelming verdict was that 'the game was different in his day. More time on the ball, less money in the bank.'

Cheating is becoming endemic and referees are incapable of recognising and penalising it.

Italy's Pierluigi Collina once told me he was confident he could recognise play-acting and diving. But in the heat and speed of a game a referee cannot have eyes everywhere; hence the increasing use of video replay technology to punish those most sly offenders who play their violent games behind the referee's back.

Yet consider the horrors of Bordeaux's Champions League tie against Manchester United. Around the half-hour mark, Bordeaux spearhead Lilian Laslandes was booked for a gesture at a referee's assistant who had been perfectly justified in flagging him offside. Less than a minute later Laslandes threw himself at David Beckham, who was in the act of releasing the ball. Laslandes appeared to clip Beckham's right foot; Beckham somersaulted into the air and fell flat on his face, both hands clasped to his left shin. Laslandes was shown another yellow card and then red.

Worse was to come, from Laslandes of all people: "I hardly touched Beckham and his acting got me sent off. But I understand why he did it. I would have done the same. He did the right thing for his team and we were punished. That's football."

Paolo Montero of Juventus followed up on the same theme a week later when he was sent off for an elbowing offence in Juve's sensational defeat by Celta Vigo in the UEFA Cup. Montero said that he had no regrets. "Football is a game of cunning," he stated. "It's all about what you can get away with."

Fair comment? From the man with Serie A's record red-card tally?

Down and out in Bordeaux...Beckham lies on the floor after clashing with Laslandes

Open borders, closed minds

THE hooligan eruption at the Marseille-Chelsea Champions League tie at the Velodrome produced quick-fire fall-out when security officials in Belgium and Holland demanded the right to reintroduce border controls for Euro 2000.

Belgium and Holland are co-signatories to the Schengen Accord which permits uninhibited travel between most of the European Union countries. But a meeting of the EU's justice ministers agreed to consider reintroducing closed borders.

Portuguese Interior Minister Fernando Gomes said: "We accepted that occasions such as these would arise occasionally."

So how come it's taking so long to talk about closing the borders to foreign footballers? More like a delaying tactic.

2006: decision time draws closer

THE 2002 World Cup is now under way, yet oddly a much longer World Cup race is shortly coming to an end. I mean the race to win hosting rights for the 2006 finals.

Battle has been joined all around the world lately, most notably at the Football Expo convention in Cannes. The haunt of film stars was taken over by soccer stars.

Franz Beckenbauer was there, extolling the virtues of Germany; Sir Bobby Charlton and Sir Geoff Hurst were there for England; Just Fontaine was there for Morocco; and Jomo Sono and Roger Milla were there to support South Africa. All stirring up memories of the past and hopes for the future.

My understanding remains that England and South Africa are joint favourites, though only a nose ahead of the Germans.

South Africa's bullish chief executive, Danny Jordaan, knows it's all or nothing. He told me: "At least in the Olympic Games an athlete who does not win gold and finishes second can take home a silver medal. But with this bid for 2006 there is just one medal. The loser is guaranteed only a broken heart."

Jordaan has become expert at deflecting questions about security. He said: "Of course we have crime. Every country has crime. Look, the Queen of England came to the heads of government conference in South Africa and stayed on for a further week."

Sepp Blatter will be all right then.

Support for South Africa...Roger Milla

Ajax's unhappy birthday

AJAX must be glad that centenary celebrations come around only once every 100 years.

These giants of the Dutch game were founded on March 18, 1900, and Ajax marked the occasion with a match against a Twente Enschede side who plainly had not read the script. They won 1-0 with a goal from the wonderfully named Jan Vennegoor of Hesselink, despite playing all the second half with 10 men after Scott Booth's dismissal right on half-time.

Ajax played in a replica of the strip worn between the 1920s and 1950s. All it brought was their second defeat in a week after a 2-0 beating by Fortuna Sittard. Two days later coach Jan Wouters was sacked.

Happy birthday!

Change in all directions

MICHEL PLATINI was under no illusions about the size of the challenge when he went to work on turning FIFA president Sepp Blatter's dream of a harmonised international calendar into reality.

As he told me: "I know everyone will criticise it – because it will involve everybody in change." Football administrators are generally conservative animals, and he has been proved right.

The innate traditionalism built into the game has been, mostly, a force for good. Where other sports have undermined their own credibility by changing laws from one year to another, football's strength has lain in maintaining its beautiful simplicity.

But when to play the game? That's another argument entirely. It's one in which misinformation and disinformation are rife.

FIFA media director Keith Cooper spelt out the Platini Plan at Football Expo in Cannes. It proposes that all top divisions be cut to a maximum of 18 clubs, with a standardised season running from February to November and international competitions squeezed into July and August. December would be holiday time and January pre-season.

The active year would feature 76 match dates split into 46 for domestic League and Cup competitions, 16 for international club competitions – including the UEFA Champions League – eight for international tournaments and six for international friendlies.

Reaction, mostly negative in Europe, has been based on the assumption that this is dictator's stuff. But Blatter has been trying in vain to calm that particular storm. He knows nobody can force England, for example, to stage the FA Cup Final in November.

What Blatter and Platini ARE saying is that, once the recommended calendar is in place, it's no good European clubs griping when their African, Asian or South American players are spirited away at inconvenient times.

If Europe wants to be out of step, then Europe must live with the consequences. Put up or shut up.

Calais join the big boys

MONACO have sewn up the French League so the domestic Cup has claimed the centre of attention – all the more so since the amateurs from Calais reached the semi-finals.

Never before has a Fourth Division team reached this stage; Calais managed it by beating Strasbourg 2-1 in the quarter-finals. Now the council shopkeepers, gardeners and students are up there alongside the highly-paid superstars of Bordeaux, Monaco and holders Nantes.

Coach Ladislas Lozano is a foreman for Calais town council. He has several players working under him before they switch out of their work gear to take another step into French soccer history. Who says the modern game has no room for the little guy?

Big in Japan...Bebeto

Bebeto joins 'last hurrah' brigade

CELTIC'S reluctantly-back-in-the-spotlight caretaker Kenny Dalglish used to infuriate the media in his playing days by falling back on the cliche that "you are only as good as your last game".

The former captain of Germany and Bayern Munich, Lothar Matthaus, can proudly do the same now that, at long last, he has taken up residence in New York to await the new MLS campaign. MetroStars have a gem, judging from the way Matthaus left Bayern: top of the table in Germany and in the quarter-finals of the Champions League.

Another old favourite in a new setting is Bebeto, a World Cup-winning hero with Brazil in 1994. Like Matthaus, he is taking up one last challenge.

In Bebeto's case that means Japan, where they love everything Brazilian. Not that Bebeto has found it easy. He was left on the sidelines by his new club, Kashima Antlers, for the opening to the J.League season. But Bebeto accepted his coach's verdict. He knew he would soon be the centre of attention again.

All very different to Nicolas Anelka, suspended for 45 days by Real Madrid for skipping training. The delicate Frenchman, it seems, does not like their tactical system.

If you are a Matthaus or a Bebeto, then you can talk. Anelka, compared with them, has nothing to say.

NOTES AND QUOTES

"I'm ashamed of my profession – all the racist banners, spitting, heated arguments and violence. Sometimes I would willingly change careers."
Roma midfielder Damiano Tommasi on the ever-controversial Italian football scene.

"Football in Germany is only crash, bang, wallop."
Spain coach Jose Antonio Camacho before Real Madrid's 4-2 defeat at home to Bayern Munich in the Champions League.

"When you have to eat porridge every day there comes a time when you can't take it any more."
Arsenal midfielder Emmanuel Petit after being charged with misconduct by the FA.

"Players such as Effenberg who refuse to play for Germany should be banned from the Bundesliga."
Ex-Germany coach Jupp Derwall despairs at the attitude of Bayern Munich's Stefan Effenberg.

The long, long trail

Michael Lewis reports as the World Cup qualifiers get under way

Let battle commence...Eugene Martha of the Dutch Antilles moves in to challenge Trinidad's Russell Latapy

THE 2002 World Cup kicked off in Port of Spain, Trinidad, on March 4 in conditions hardly fitting a world-class competition that will climax with a memorable month of celebration in two years' time.

The scoreboard and game clock did not work; the star striker of the home team was not allowed to play; and fans were not exactly breaking down the doors to watch. Indeed, only about 8,000 turned up to watch Trinidad & Tobago thrash the Dutch Antilles 5-0, in the first match of the longest-ever qualifying competition.

Over the 21 months between this March and November 2001, 197 countries will play 809 games to determine 29 qualifiers for the World Cup. Co-hosts South Korea and Japan and defending champions France go through automatically.

While the crowd never lost their enthusiasm during the opening game – and a calypso band played from kick-off to final whistle – the atmosphere could not compare with what is expected at Yokohama International stadium on June 30, 2002. A sellout crowd of 70,718 and a global TV audience of nearly two billion are expected to watch the tournament Final.

Following World Cup tradition, tickets will be virtually impossible to get. In contrast, seats in Port of Spain were plentiful and relatively inexpensive, ranging from £3.50 for the terraces to £5.25 in the stands (with a roof) and £25 in VIP seating, which included food, drinks and a gift.

The soccer fans of Trinidad, however, were a bit distracted. With their team facing the prospect of up to 24 games to reach soccer's promised land, many supporters could not get excited about attending the first match of the competition. They had other things in mind, such as Carnival 2000, a two-day celebration of life which began the night after the game.

In addition, even before a ball was kicked, Trinidad were involved in not one but two controversies – an international tug-of-war with Manchester United over striker Dwight Yorke and the first coaching casualty of

Low-tech...the blank scoreboard and non-functioning clock at Port of Spain

the World Cup. United won the battle of what could be an ongoing war between club and country. Yorke, who played for Trinidad in the early rounds of the recent Gold Cup, was not in the team against Antilles, having opted out after he had played 85 minutes for his club a few days earlier.

Less than a week before the match, Bertille St Clair was dismissed by the Trinidad Football Federation after his side were eliminated by eventual champions Canada in the semi-finals of the Gold Cup.

St Clair undoubtedly will not be the last coach axed during qualifying, bearing in mind the fact that nine of the 32 finalists at the 1998 World Cup had changed coaches on the way to France.

Trinidad captain Anthony Rougier said: "This was not a situation we wanted in the World Cup preliminary round. The players have done very well in the circumstances. This has been a very, very stressful week, and we feel pretty proud of ourselves."

Ian Porterfield, a former FA Cup winner with Sunderland who has had coaching experience in the English Premiership and with the national teams of Zambia, Zimbabwe and Oman, was named as St Clair's successor less than 48 hours before kick-off.

Even with those obstacles, Trinidad prevailed with relative ease, settling down after a slow start and virtually attacking at will against the Antilles.

Marvin Andrews, who plays for Raith Rovers in the Scottish First Division, scored the first goal of the competition, Angus Eve of Chester City in England added the next two, and Arnold Dwarika scored two more.

Eugene Martha of Antilles had the dubious distinction of being the first player sent off in the competition, after picking up a second yellow from Honduran referee Argelio Sabillon.

"We started out a little bit shakily," Porterfield said, "but we improved and scored some very good goals. If anyone had told me that we would win 5-0, I would have been very happy."

Paul Gardner

GLOBAL VIEW

Clear out the cheats - and start from the back

OF all FIFA's recent rule changes, the worst, the one most open to abuse and most likely to produce ludicrous injustice, is the one that requires the referee to give a yellow card for diving.

The abuse, of course, comes from the referees. They have been given another excuse for the ceremonial brandishing of the yellow, and have not been slow to take advantage.

When the rule first came into practice last year in Major League Soccer (three months before its worldwide adoption), only a couple of months passed before a memo had to be sent to all referees telling them to ease up. Far too many of the calls were highly questionable, some of them downright ludicrous.

Referees chief Joe Machnik felt that officials were actively looking for examples of diving – and finding quite a few that simply weren't there.

I'm not going to forget in a hurry the sight of the 10st 5lb Cobi Jones being clobbered in the penalty area, by 14st goalkeeper Chris Snitko. Penalty? Forget it – Jones got a yellow for diving!

An even more disastrous example came in the recent UEFA Cup game between Monaco and Mallorca. Monaco were trying to overcome a 4-1 first-leg deficit. They got to 4-2, then, when Marcelo Gallardo was fouled in the area, appeared to have won a penalty that could have made it 4-3.

Up comes referee Graham Poll. No penalty. Yellow to Gallardo for diving, which meant that Monaco's key player was off, Poll having previously cautioned him. Gallardo said he was fouled, television backed up his view.

The suspicion is bound to be fostered that the yellow card is being used as a justification for not awarding the penalty-kick. If there is anything that the sport does *not* need, it's an encouragement to referees to duck their most difficult call.

FIFA general secretary Michel Zen-Ruffinen, a former international referee, told me recently: "There's always more criticism if you give a penalty kick than if you don't. If he's in doubt, the referee will not give a penalty."

Cheating has become something of an obsession with the FIFA top brass. They're against it, you'll be relieved to know – and I'm certainly not about to speak up in favour of more cheating.

But we need to be clear as to who is doing the cheating. As long as the emphasis is on diving, it's going to be attacking players who will be the prime targets for yellow cards.

This is worrying because it is likely to mean that the far more serious form of cheating practised by defenders – namely illegal, and frequently violent, tackling – will be considered less of a menace to the game, and will therefore go unpunished.

It can be argued plausibly that the diving pandemic, if that's what it is, arose as a form of protection against violent defenders. When referees are reluctant to punish systematic fouling by defenders, the attackers invent their own protection.

It would be regrettable if football, in search of honesty, misdirected itself back to the wild west days of the 1970s when rugged defence and rustic tackling turned the beautiful game ugly.

It will be argued that I'm on about two different things, and that the real problem with diving is that it is sneaky, an attempt to con the referee.

Tough tackling, on the other hand, is manly, it's part of the game, and what if it does go a bit too far sometimes?

From there you move on to xenophobia bordering on racism – it's only the foreigners who cheat by throwing themselves to the ground, it's the Latins who can't take the physical side of the game, and so on.

Agreed, there is a difference, but I do not find one offence more reprehensible than the other. Both are attempts to pervert the game.

Rough tackling is clearly the more dangerous – both in what it does to distort the sport and the damage it is likely to inflict on players.

I've yet to hear of a defender who has had a leg broken or a knee wrecked or his career jeopardised by a forward diving over him.

I'm not under any illusions. Players clearly do dive and sometimes get away with it. Yes, they ought to be punished. But ask yourself a couple of simple questions:

A: How many times have you seen violent tackles in the area that should have been, but were not, punished with penalties? B: How many times have you seen penalties wrongly given to a player who clearly dived?

I'll be very surprised if Total A isn't many times higher than Total B – which is why I think the FIFA emphasis on diving is misplaced.

Rule-breaking by defenders and goalkeepers is much more common. That's where the problems start. And that's where the search for culprits should begin.

NOTES AND QUOTES

"The real power in Italian football lies not with the League or the federation but with the two clubs [Juventus and Milan] who have divided up the League titles since 1992."
Roma president Franco Sensi's conspiracy theory.

"The second group phase of the Champions League is one too many. It would be better to replace it with a knockout second round and reduce the number of games needed to win the competition from 17 to 13."
Bayern Munich coach Ottmar Hitzfeld's feelings on the current Champions League format.

Greek forward pays the ultimate price

EVERY time Prodromos Papadopoulos stepped on to a soccer pitch, he knew that he was playing a match with death. And on March 11, he lost.

The 27-year-old, who played for Greek Fourth Division leaders Patraikos, scored his last goal that day, leading his club to a 3-1 home victory against Ageus Plomariou. It was his 16th of the season, following on from a tally of 37 last term, when he topped the divisional list.

Later that day he died of a heart attack brought on by diabetes, which he had concealed from club officials because he did not want to be denied the chance of playing his favourite sport.

Papadopoulos was buried in his home town, Drama, with hundreds of family members, friends, fans and team-mates paying their last respects. People who knew him said he was a brave young man who gave all for his team in the face of death.

Lou Economopoulos

Dynamic in Dresden

Jim Holden meets a young English coach earning rave reviews

Catalyst for change...Dynamo have enjoyed an upturn in fortunes during Colin Bell's reign

COLIN BELL has long been an evocative name in English football, associated with the dynamic midfielder who starred for Manchester City and England before injury destroyed his career.

But today another Colin Bell is making a name for himself – as the ambitious young manager who is transforming German club Dynamo Dresden.

This Bell, aged 38 and no relation, was an apprentice pal of Gary Lineker at Leicester City but never made the grade. At 20, on an agent's whim, he joined German Third Division club Vfl Hamm to try his luck for a season and has never looked back.

Bell's best spell as a player was in the Bundesliga Second Division with Mainz, but he quickly realised his greatest talent lay as a coach.

By his 28th birthday he had become one of the youngest men to earn the top German football coaching qualification, an essential requirement for anyone wanting to work in the Bundesliga. And after a spell in charge at Koblenz, whom he guided to promotion, Bell joined Koln as assistant manager for two seasons.

All the time he remained unknown in England. But a burgeoning reputation in Germany brought an offer last April to take over at seemingly

doomed Dynamo Dresden, automatically relegated from the Bundesliga to the Third Division (North-East region) in 1995 due to massive debts, and having had to sell stars such as Matthias Sammer, Ulf Kirsten and Jens Jeremies.

The former chairman allegedly used the club as a money-laundering operation and is now in jail.

Bell appeared an unlikely saviour, but coaxed the youngsters who were left at Dynamo to avoid another drop, probably saving the club from extinction. Progress has continued and Dresden are now comfortably mid-table.

"We get huge crowds," says Bell, "and the pressure on the kids is immense. This was the biggest club in the old East Germany and the supporters are desperate for the kind of success they once took for granted.

"I'm enjoying the challenge so much, being able to put into practice what I've learned as a manager and coach in the past 10 years. I firmly believe you need a good apprenticeship for this job.

"One day I would love to return to England and work in the Premiership. Looking from abroad I can tell you that it's the place to be in football right now – for the excitement level and for the quality of players."

Whether he'll get the chance is open to question. Bell knows that coaching experience like his counts for less in England than a superstar reputation.

"I don't have a history as a former star player, and I wonder if that will be held against me in England," he says. "I shouldn't think too many people remember me at home, although I get messages of support from my old pal Lineker once in a while.

"What I'd like is to be judged on my record as a manager, what I've done with various clubs in Germany. But club chairmen might look at me and think it was too risky to give me a chance. 'Who's this Colin Bell?', they'd say to themselves. But I know the job."

The name still confuses many fans in Germany. They appreciate Bell's managerial qualities, but are convinced he must be the former England star, who won 48 caps between 1968 and 1976, as well as several medals with Manchester City – Second Division 1966, First Division 1968, FA Cup 1969, League Cup 1970 and Cup-winners Cup 1970.

"Every week I get a pile of letters with photos to sign," says the unknown Colin Bell. "Nearly all of the pictures are action shots of my namesake in his England kit." It's something he'll have to live with for a while longer yet.

Roy Hodgson

OPINION

Hosts Holland have the edge this summer

Grasshopper's coach believes home advantage may be just what the Dutch need to shade it at Euro 2000

YES, it was only one game, but on the basis of Holland's victory over Germany last month, they look an extremely complete and well-organised team. With home advantage, it is easy to see why the Dutch will be pushed and projected into the role of favourites to win Euro 2000.

Otherwise it will be a very equal and competitive tournament. Spain and the Czech Republic stood out in the qualifiers, but then they were playing in two of the easier groups.

If you look at the finalists, virtually all are capable of winning the competition. The only teams who are not are Slovenia and Belgium, but even then the Belgians will have home advantage, so they cannot be ruled out completely.

This really is the most difficult competition in which to predict a winner. In recent years, we've seen Denmark win, we've seen the Czech Republic finish second. To get through the opening groups, you are going to have to beat some tough teams, and in the quarter-finals you are likely to play an England, a Germany or a France.

But if I had to stick my neck out and pick two finalists, I would say Holland and Spain. The Spanish have been my favourites before, and have been very unlucky in the past. At Euro 96 and World Cup 98 they played good football but conceded some silly goals. The Spanish League is very competitive and if they get the rub of the green this time round, they will have deserved it for the quality of their football.

The Dutch have great strength in depth and they have been playing together for a long time. They have Davids and Seedorf in central midfield, Stam and Cocu in central defence, the two De Boers, and the excellent young forward Van Nistelrooy. Also the likes of Zenden and Kluivert have been playing together at Barcelona.

Germany, England and Italy all had problems in the qualifiers – this was not a completely stutter-free campaign for any of them.

The Scandinavian teams and the Czechs all went through the qualifiers with flying colours, but I worry a little about Sweden. They have been very successful in the 1990s, but they are an ageing side and it may be hard for Tommy Soderberg to motivate them again.

Euro 2000 is going to be an excellent tournament with so many quality teams and so many quality players. I can't wait.

Roy Hodgson will be attending Euro 2000 as a technical observer for UEFA

Excellent forward...Ruud Van Nistelrooy

NOTES AND QUOTES

"The one positive thing to come out of the game was that our fans stayed behind us all the way and the goal we pulled back at the end of the game was down to the supporters."
Ulm coach Martin Andermatt tries to find some consolation from his team's 9-1 defeat at home to Bayer Leverkusen in the Bundesliga.

"It's the saddest day of my life, but by offering my pay-off cheque [£150,000] to children in need, I hope to get over this big disappointment."
Ex-Brazilian World Cup skipper Dunga after being released by Internacional of Porto Alegre because the club could not afford his wages.

"They told us they needed the points and if we didn't lose, they had our names and addresses."
Michel Catanier, the president of French Fifth Division side Orange, describes how armed, masked men burst into his team's dressing- room before a relegation battle with Corsican club Lucciana CABG and threatened them. The Corsicans won 1-0.

Clayton admits lying about his age

BRAZIL-BORN defender Jose Clayton, who played for Tunisia at the 1998 World Cup, has admitted using falsified documents to gain Tunisian citizenship.

Clayton, responding to claims by Brazilian newspaper *Folha de Sao Paulo*, said he took three years off his age, making him 25 and not 28.

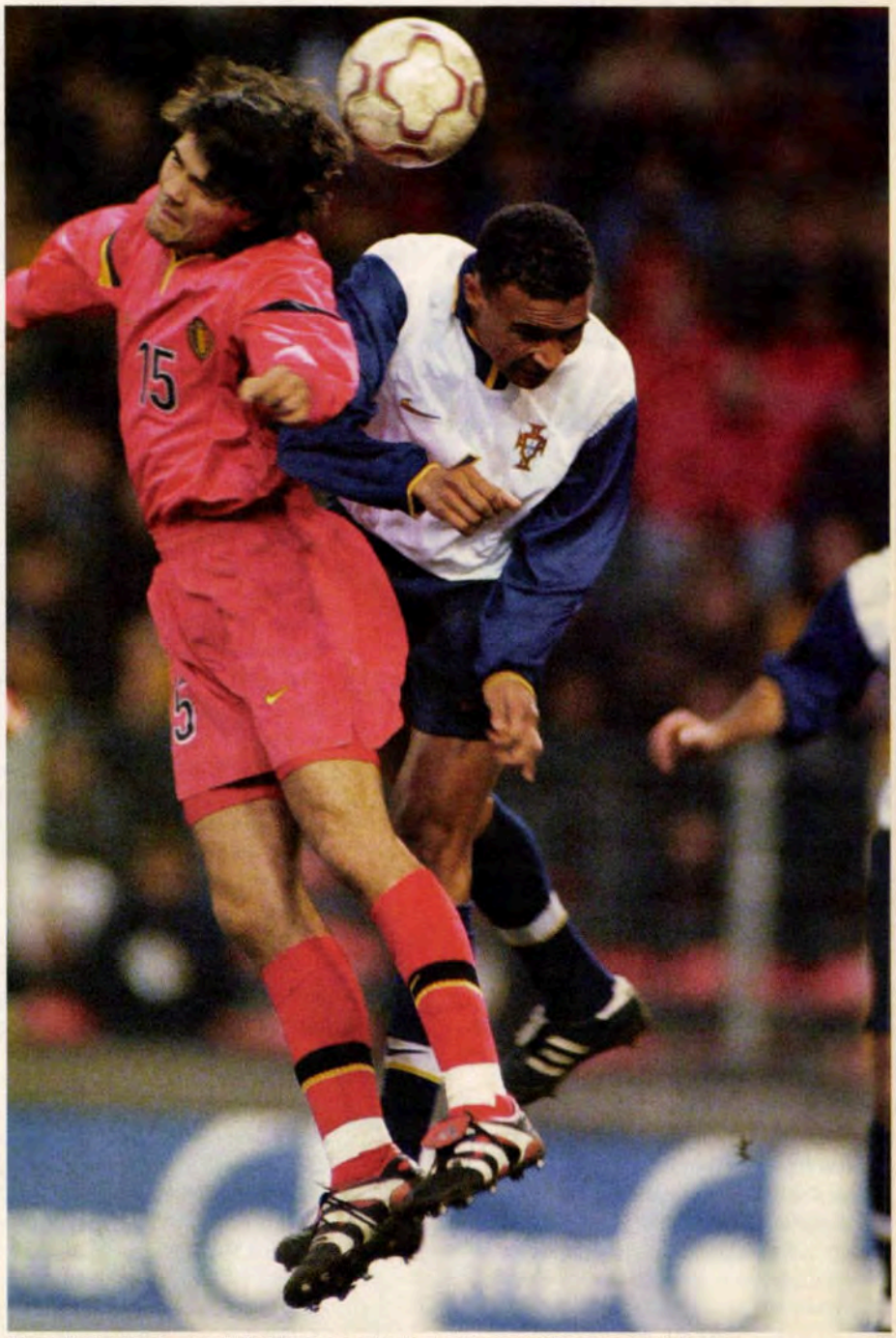
"Otherwise they would not have selected me for the World Cup. I didn't kill anyone. I only did it to earn a living."

Brothers in arms

Mark Gleeson on an extraordinary footballing family

WHEN Sporting Lisbon's strong-running, tough-tackling midfielder Jose Luis Vidigal got his first cap for Portugal in February's friendly international against Belgium in Charleroi, it was another achievement for a footballing clan of some distinction.

Jose Luis and his brother Jose Carlos,



International debut...Jose Luis Vidigal played in Portugal's recent friendly against Belgium

Family ties...Jose Luis (left) and Lito

whose footballing name is Lito, are now both internationals – for different countries!

We believe this achievement to be a record for world football, certainly in the modern era of the game.

The Vidigal family are five brothers strong, all of them playing in Portugal. They hail originally from Angola – the eldest three were born in Luanda – but have lived in Portoalegre, near Lisbon, since the revolution in the mid-1970s.

Lito, who is the captain of Belenenses, was first capped by Angola in 1996 in a World Cup qualifier against Uganda, having been brought to the team by Portuguese coach Neca.

He went on to play 16 times for *Palancas Negras*, including the 1998 African Nations Cup finals in Burkina Faso, but has not been called up since January last year.

Jose Luis was also chased by the Angolans but had won caps for Portugal's Under-21 team and could not be considered.

Lito, now 30, is the second eldest of the brothers. Jose Luis, who turned 27 in March, is the third in line.

Elder brother Beto is 34 and still playing at 0' Elvas, a one-time First Division club from Portoalegre but now in Division Four.

The two younger brothers are promising prospects, available to play for either Angola or Portugal should they be selected.

Toni Vidigal, 25, is at Penafiel and was born in Portugal. His career started at Estoril, where the youngest brother, 20-year-old Jorge, is currently playing. He has hopes of moving on to join Jose Luis at Sporting, having already had trials with the club.

Jim Holden

OPINION

Cheap but not nasty

Foreign imports are the name of the modern game

ALL over Europe football people are moaning about the impact of "cheap foreign imports" on the game in their country.

Germany's coach Erich Ribbeck blames it for the decline of his national side, while in the Premier League there was widespread dismay when Chelsea fielded a team with 11 foreigners.

The issue of bringing in quotas to limit the number of overseas players is soon to be discussed with European Union officials.

Soccer will argue a passionate case for exemption from free trade barriers that lie at the heart of the EU's existence, and which they insisted on for football through the Bosman ruling.

But here is a thought for all those with fierce opinions on the subject.

Look at the country of origin of everything in your own life, from shoes and suits to dishwashers, lawnmowers and cars. How many are manufactured in your own country? How many are 'cheaper foreign imports'?

Unless you've made a massive and conscious effort, the answer will be shockingly uncomfortable.

Cars from Malaysia, shirts from Puerto Rico, shoes from Brazil, toasters from Hong Kong – the list is never-ending, because that's the way of the modern world.

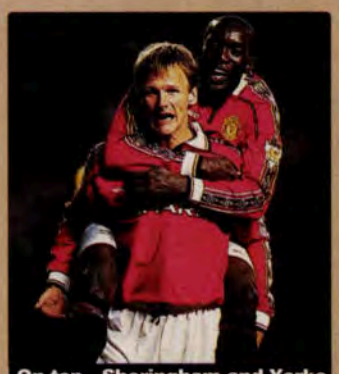
Everybody wants value for money – rather than less cash in their bank account but the satisfaction of keeping a countryman in his job.

Almost every pair of training shoes is now made in China, Indonesia, Thailand or Vietnam – in exploitative low-wage economies.

Over here...Flo, Zola and Babayaro

Never hear a peep about that from football people who profit from the millions pumped in by Nike, Adidas, Puma and the rest, do you? The same is true for footballs, the very essence of the sport; they are mostly cheap foreign imports – and that, like it or not, is now the name of the game.

CNN WORLD SOCCER CLUB OF THE MONTH



On top...Sheringham and Yorke

1 Manchester United
2 Juventus
3 Bayern Munich
4 Barcelona
5 River Plate
6 Lazio
7 Corinthians
8 Internazionale
9 Leeds United
10 Real Madrid

NOTES AND QUOTES

"As long as Engel is the coach, I will not play for the national team. Engel is the laughing stock of Poland."
Polish striker Andrzej Juskowiak rules himself out of international football with an attack on national coach Jerzy Engel.

"The President of the Republic took note of all the arguments that were presented to him and indicated French sympathy towards the Moroccan bid to host the World Cup in 2006."
A spokeswoman for Jacques Chirac reveals his preference towards the Moroccan candidacy.

"I understand some of the preoccupations of the G14 group [the leading European clubs]. But when they demand 50 per cent of the receipts of international matches, they are making themselves look ridiculous."
UEFA boss Gerhard Aigner.

"They're treating me like a dog."
Nicolas Anelka on his latest bust-up with Real Madrid, interviewed in France Football.

A dog's life...Nicolas Anelka

Chilavert's warning

New ball can damage your health, says Paraguay keeper

A WARNING to all goalkeepers: the new, lighter football being introduced at international level and across the world can damage your health.

That is the word from Paraguay's Jose Luis Chilavert to the likes of Germany's Oliver Kahn and England's David Seaman as they prepare for the European Championship finals this summer.

The new, lighter ball has been used most notably in the Nationwide League this season and was credited with a role in Tranmere's cup successes because it gave added distance to Dave Challinor's throw-ins.

But the ball also is an injury risk, according to Chilavert, who has become the world's top-scoring goalkeeper thanks to his deadly ratio of success with free-kicks and penalties. Chilavert plays in Argentina with former South American champions Velez Sarsfield, and worked long and hard with the new football in training for the new Argentinian season.

He said: "I can see that the new ball will cause a string of injuries among free-kick specialists and goalkeepers.

"Because of the lack of weight it offers comparatively little resistance to the kicker and that can lead to knee damage for players who kick it hard and

Free-kick specialist...Jose Luis Chilavert

regularly – like free-kick takers but also goalkeepers.

"There is another problem for keepers, and that is the extra amount of swerve as the ball comes at you.

"I am not sure how much thought goes into the introduction of changes like this. It is good for the businesses involved but that does not necessarily mean it is good for footballers or the game. Players should be careful.

"I would not want to see a lot of goalkeepers being injured at, say, the European Championship because they did not realise what the authorities have done."

Chilavert has studied his subject. As he said: "I take more than 120 free-kicks every day. To succeed and show that I am better than the others, I must work more than the others.

"The majority of players do what the coach tells them and then run off to the showers and home. I stay on and work alone. I have the same enthusiasm as the day I started playing with Deportivo Luque.

"That also means I know what I am talking about when it comes to the new football."

Chilavert remains a larger-than-life personality, everyone's favourite target – though not, fortunately, always in the manner beloved of Argentinian hooligans. He had to be helped off the pitch recently, stunned, after a smoke bomb was thrown close to him during a League match against Lanus. The game was held up for 15 minutes before peace – and Chilavert – could be restored.

At least he is not maintaining his boycott of his own national team. Chilavert, to the regret of his fellow countrymen, refused to play when Paraguay staged the Copa America last year. He was protesting at the appointment of a controversial army general to head the organising committee.

"That is history," said Chilavert. "What matters now is that we all pull together to reach the World Cup finals again." Then, in Japan and South Korea, Chilavert can once again dream of becoming the first goalkeeper to score in the opposition's net at a World Cup finals.

Keir Radnedge

David Miller

OPINION

Africa: The enemies within

THE African continent is continually complaining that it does not receive sufficient recognition from the rest of the football world, in a variety of ways.

The belief is that African nations, individually and collectively, should be granted more aid, more coaching, more frequent hosting of international tournaments, and, most of all, more places in the World Cup finals.

Be this as it may, the sad and irrefutable fact is that nowhere is more harm done to the African game, more limitation imposed upon its performance, than behind its own doors. This was to be plainly seen in the recent Nations Cup, staged jointly in Ghana and Nigeria.

I am not referring to financial and logistical problems, but the wilful and ignorant interference in the management of national squads by governments, by so-called sports ministers and their placemen.

At the very time that the talent emerging from Africa equals or even exceeds that of the traditional hotbeds – the Balkans, the Mediterranean and Latin America – mismanagement denies Africa the chance to fulfil its potential.

The Blatter-Platini plan to reschedule the international calendar, rationalising the 'windows' for national and club commitments in between domestic League fixtures – which pay the wages – will assist Africa, but not unless team affairs are placed in the hands of competent professionals. As Kanu lamented, between rounds in Lagos: "There's nothing wrong with Nigerian players. The ability is there. The problems lie with the administration."

Four teams illustrated, simultaneously, the potential and the vulnerability of the fountain of African talent: Cameroon, Nigeria, South Africa and Senegal. I am excluding the extreme example of Ivory Coast, whose humiliation at the hands of their own military junta was dealt with in last month's *World Soccer*. FIFA should take disciplinary action on such political brigandry; I am concerned with sporting incompetence.

Any of the four teams mentioned have, I believe, the ability to reach the quarter-finals if not the last four of the World Cup, if professionally organised. South Africa's campaign, however, was a shambles.

Coach Trott Moloto had little if any idea of tactical planning or adjustment, was ridiculed by the national press and ignored by his players, who would decide privately how the opposition should be handled.

Moloto was seriously unqualified to be handling a squad at this level, being a pawn in the government's sports administration. To make matters worse, he ignored the advice coming from Horst Kreite, his German technical adviser and national director of coaching.

"It is essential we should play man-for-man against Nigeria in the semi-final, to handle their individualism," Kreite had warned. Moloto did nothing, left huge gaps which Nigeria exploited, made no adjustment to Nigeria's shrewd switching of Babangida, the Ajax winger, from right to left. Moloto's swift dismissal after the tournament was all too predictable. And too late.

Semi-final elimination was not a crucial blow to South Africa's bid for World Cup 2006, though certainly their appearance in the African Final would have been beneficial.

Nigeria had fallen short in the World Cup two years previously, their team cobbled together at the last minute by interim coach Bora Milutinovic. They should have won in Lagos, given their profusion of skills honed in European Leagues.

They lost because Jo Bonfrere, their Dutch coach, persisted with an out-of-touch Jay-Jay Okocha, national hero but the man on whom play repeatedly broke down in the Final.

Bonfrere leaned upon by FA officials? In the endless succession of Nigeria's broken contracts and haphazard appointment of coaches, Bonfrere had been owed money, now knew the FA was struggling to pay its bills, and he would not have wished to raise public wrath by excluding Okocha – who was suspended from the semi-final – against Cameroon. In the event, Okocha was static, never supported colleagues, and obliged Kanu to run himself to a standstill.

In the grandstand, Heinz Marotzke, Swiss coach and FA adviser, was repeatedly exasperated by Nigerian tactics: the failure to use the wings against Senegal in the quarter-final – when only substitute Aghahowa saved the day with his two late goals – and by the refusal to replace Okocha in the Final.

"Again and again Nigeria are making elementary tactical errors," Marotzke said. Here is a country which, with its wasted wealth, might be emulating Brazil could it only get organised.

The same is almost as true of Cameroon and Senegal. Peter Schnittger, Senegal's German coach, was so nearly rewarded by his counter-attacking policy against Nigeria, but until national football federations are given a fair chance by unconditional government funding, Africa will squander its heritage.

Pierre Lechantre, Cameroon's coach, had done a remarkable job. With his preparation severely restricted because of lack of funds, he nonetheless produced in the space of a few weeks a side tactically stronger than that which scared England witless in the 1990 World Cup.

It is tantalising to consider what a team such as Cameroon might achieve given even a quarter of the professional back-up of, say, Germany.

If African governments put as much into their football as their armies, that would be something.

TRANSFERS

PLAYER		FROM	TO
Samassi ABOU	F	West Ham	Kilmarnock (loan)
Khodadad AZIZI	F	Koln	San Jose Earthquakes
Slaven BILIC	D	Everton	Hajduk Split
Jorge CADETE	F	Benfica	Bradford (loan)
Sasa CURCIC	M	Free agent	Motherwell
Tahar EL KHALEJ	D	Benfica	Southampton
Ian FEUER	G	Cardiff	West Ham
Esteban FUERTES	F	Derby	Colon Santa Fe (loan)
Emile HESKEY	F	Leicester	Liverpool
Mark HUGHES	F	Southampton	Everton
Stephen HUGHES	M	Arsenal	Everton
Bogdan LOBONT	G	Rapid Bucharest	Ajax
Lothar MATTHAUS	D	Bayern Munich	NY/NJ MetroStars
Avi NIMNI	M	Derby	Maccabi Tel Aviv (end of loan)
Sean O'CONNOR	M	Hednesford	Dundee United
Fernando PASQUINELLI	F	Boca Juniors	Leicester (loan)
Daniel PRODAN	D	Rangers	Steaua Bucharest (loan)
Kjetil REKDAL	D	Hertha Berlin	Valerenga
Hristo STOICHKOV	F	Free agent	Chicago Fire
Ilya TSYMBALAR	M	Free agent	Lokomotiv Moscow
Adolfo VALENCIA	F	PAOK Salonika	NY/NJ MetroStars
Murat YAKIN	M	Fenerbahce	Basle
Rachidi YEKINI	F	Al Shabab	Africa Sports
Sibusiso ZUMA	F	Orlando Pirates	FC Copenhagen

Exit Asprilla

INTERNATIONAL INS AND OUTS

FAUSTINO ASPRILLA has announced his retirement from international football after being left out of Colombia's squad to face Brazil in a World Cup qualifier at the end of March.

More than a year after he last appeared for Georgia, **Georgi Kinkladze** was back in the squad for the friendly against Israel, who recalled **Haim Revivo,** four months after he announced that he was quitting international football.

Scotland coach Craig Brown named defender **Matt Elliott** in his squad against France for the first time since being banned for a butting incident against the Faroes last June.

Trinidad & Tobago's **David Nakhid**, **Jerren Nixon** and **Michael McComie** have been "relieved from future duty" with the team following the 1-0 defeat by Canada in the Gold Cup semi-finals.

Quitting...Faustino Asprilla

COACHES ON THE MOVE

FIORENTINA boss **Giovanni Trapattoni** will step down at the end of the season. The announcement came after the team were knocked out of the Champions League.

New deal...Kevin Phillips

Marcos Alonso, who guided Sevilla to promotion last season, has resigned with the club bottom of Spain's top flight. He has been replaced by reserve team coach Jose Carlos Alvarez.

The United Arab Emirates have named **Henri Michel** as their new national coach on an initial 14-month contract. The Frenchman was sacked by Morocco following their early exit from the African Nations Cup.

Oleg Blokhin, the former Soviet Union international, has taken charge of Ionikos in Greece for the second time. He was previously at the club from 1995 to 1997.

Former South Africa coach **Clive Barker** has agreed to take the reins for three months at Santos of Cape Town. He resigned from Durban club AmaZulu at the end of last year.

COACHES STAYING ON

COVENTRY manager **Gordon Strachan** has agreed a new five-year deal with the Premiership club.

PLAYERS STAYING ON

PARMA'S **Hernan Crespo** and **Lilian Thuram** have extended their deals, committing themselves to the club until June 2005.

Sunderland forward **Kevin Phillips** has signed a new five-year contract. The club has also agreed new deals with goalkeeper **Thomas Sorenson**, midfielders **Gavin McCann** and **Alex Rae**, and defender **Chris Makin**.

Chelsea's **Dan Petrescu** has added two years to his contract, as has Everton defender **Richard Gough**.

Goalkeeper **Ruud Hesp** has extended his contract at Barcelona by a year, taking him to summer 2001.

OUT OF ACTION

PERUGIA goalkeeper **Angelo Pagotto** has been banned for two years after testing positive for cocaine. Meanwhile, his team-mate, French midfielder **Ibrahim Ba**, looks set to miss the rest of the season after tearing knee ligaments.

Elsewhere in Italy, Juventus striker **Daniel Fonseca** has been sidelined for the remainder of the campaign after a knee operation. Milan midfielder **Zvonimir Boban** will also miss the championship run-in because he requires knee surgery.

Japanese striker **Shinji Jo**, on loan at Valladolid from Yokohama F Marinos, may be out for up to seven months

Ruled out...Zvonimir Boban

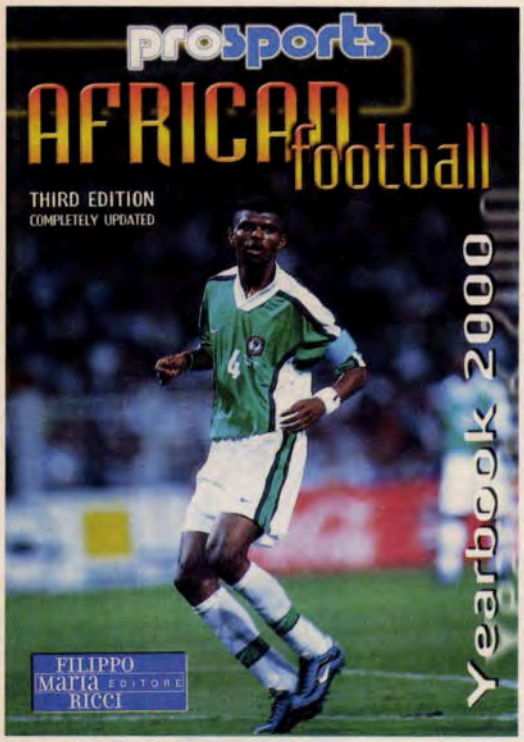
after injuring a knee in the recent international against China.

Wrist ligament damage has put Valencia reserve keeper **Andres Palop** out until the summer. Malaga's Portuguese midfielder **Edgar** is another long-term absentee after rupturing knee ligaments.

Jose Maria Ceballos, the Racing Santander keeper, was banned for eight games for verbally abusing officials during a game against Zaragoza.

Veteran West Ham defender **Stuart Pearce** broke a leg for the second time in six months in a League game against Southampton, ending any hope of him making England's squad for Euro 2000.

BOOK OF THE MONTH



AFRICAN FOOTBALL YEARBOOK 2000
by Filippo Maria Ricci
(approx £18.99, available from Piazza Vescovio, 7 - 00199, Rome, Italy; e-mail: phillys@iol.it fax: 0039 06 86215197)

THE THIRD edition of the African Football Yearbook has been completely updated and remains the comprehensive work of its kind on the African game. It is a labour of love for Italian Filippo Maria Ricci and he has produced this latest, impressive effort only with generous help from assorted sponsors. There are many gaps and omissions – such is the nature of collecting statistics on African football – but it is still well worth a look.

Gavin Hamilton

COMPETITION

Win a football signed by members of England's 1966 World Cup-winning side

We have teamed up with Airtours to offer you the chance to win one of five footballs signed by Nobby Stiles, George Cohen, Roger Hunt, Alan Ball and Ray Wilson. All you have to do is answer the following question:

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London SE1 9LS

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COMPETITION

NEXT MONTH

The countdown to Euro 2000 continues

More hard-hitting news
More big-name interviews
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PLUS

(finally) we name the world's richest league and wealthiest club (clue: it's not Manchester Utd)

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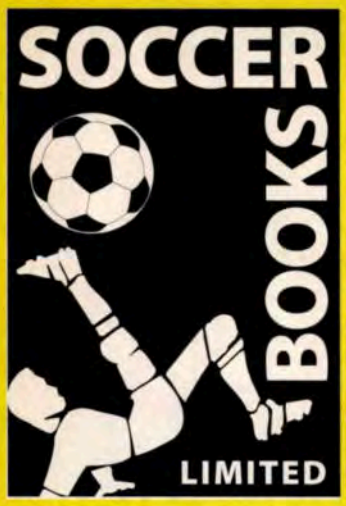

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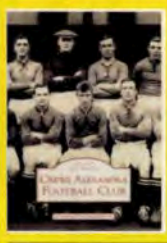

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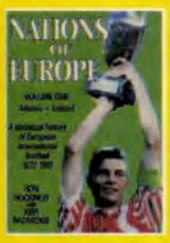

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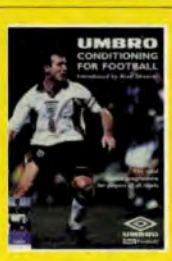

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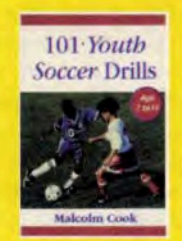

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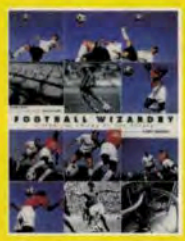

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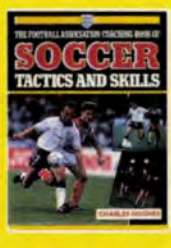

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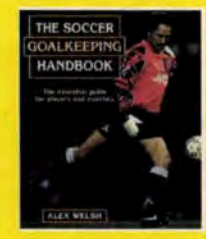

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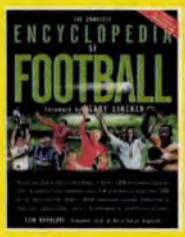

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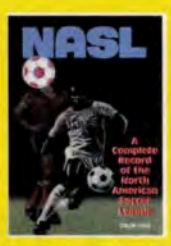

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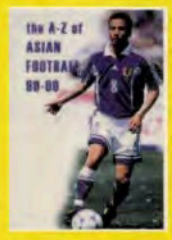

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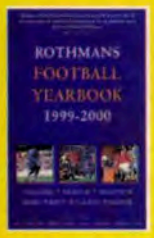

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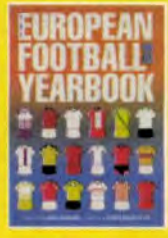

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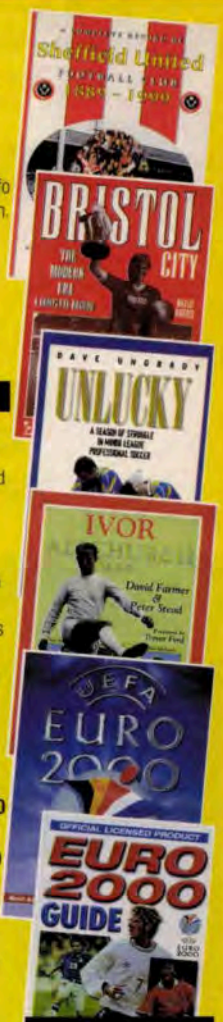

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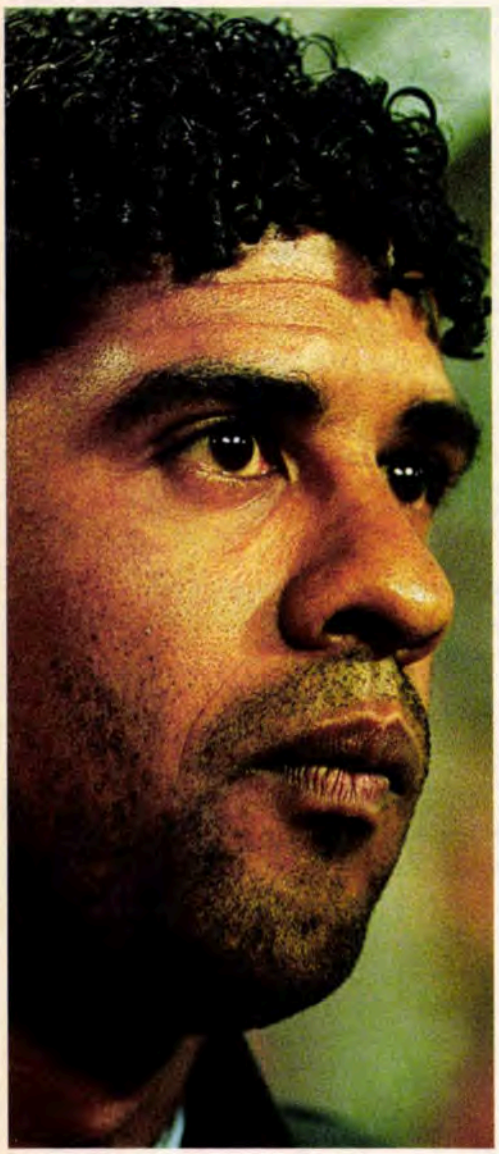
Keeping it simple

Holland coach Frank Rijkaard talks exclusively to Gavin Hamilton



World Soccer: We're talking on the morning after Holland beat Germany 2-1 in Amsterdam. You were so far superior to the Germans. Were you more surprised at the strength of your own side or at how poorly the German team played?

FRANK RIJKAARD: Well, we played a great first half. Our football was good because we have players with all kinds of qualities. But we played simple football. By that I mean we let the ball do the work. All the positions on the field were very well covered. The defenders did a good job.

We had hoped that Philip Cocu could make a difference because he went into the midfield and directed the game. Because of that, we could stay in position and let the ball do the work.

Of course I am happy for the players and for the public that the result went the way it did, but it was no surprise because we already knew that we had great players in our selection.

Nevertheless, if you watched the game, you could see that we were the better side, although in the second half we had some problems. The Germans fought their way back into the game. That proves that quality alone is not enough. You have got to keep doing what you have to do. The players have to keep supporting each other and keep on playing simple, simple football. If we play simple we can reach a very good level.

The Germans were not that weak. We played a good game. It's not for nothing that the Germans do not lose many games. I do not consider the German team to be weak.

But it must have given you a big psychological boost to say you have beaten the Germans in the run-up to a major tournament?

Well, psychological games are part of modern football but they can be very dangerous. If you look at the countries taking part in Euro 2000, every team can beat every other team. The differences are not very large any more. Most national teams have players who are playing all over Europe.

Take Portugal; they're a little bit like Holland. They have players with Barcelona, with Lazio, everywhere. They are all playing at a high level across Europe. It's the same for the Scandinavian countries.

Everybody is playing abroad and they are big international stars. You can't say that this or that country can't play football any more. That's a dangerous opinion. If you think that, you get beaten.

Has that helped you inspire the team?

Oh yes, I used it in my final words to the team before they went out on to the pitch.

Are you too dependent on Davids and Seedorf in midfield?

No. The rhythm of the game against Germany was created by Cocu, because he was the extra man in midfield. To let Cocu play, Davids and Seedorf had to make a little bit of space for him. Otherwise it would have been very crowded. They made the space and Cocu was able to dictate the game. After that Davids and Seedorf, particularly Davids, were fantastic. But it is not just about two names. If you play a simple game it means that everybody in the team is doing his job.

Was it significant that you selected Ruud Van Nistelrooy to partner Kluivert, instead of Bergkamp?

We have had to cope with two years of friendly matches. You have to rotate the players, we have to see what the possibilities are. It was not strange to give an opportunity to a player like Van Nistelrooy. He's in great form and great shape.

During the tournament I am going to have to deal with injuries and suspensions, so I need to know how a player reacts when it is for real. Playing a game in the Amsterdam Arena in front of a sell-out crowd was a good test for Van Nistelrooy.

So form is more important than the name?

Yes. Many people ask about Bergkamp. For me, Bergkamp is a very important player. When he is in form, he's one of the most exciting players in Europe. But Bergkamp has been injured and he didn't have the right rhythm. So it was the right and logical moment to see how Van Nistelrooy got on.

Have you discovered a new player in Cocu the central defender?

No, it's not something that I have discovered. Looking at Germany, we knew that they would play with one centre-forward, Bierhoff, and with two wide attackers, Scholl and Neuville. That meant that they would leave a gap behind Bierhoff. We figured that Cocu could move into that gap. He was one of the best players to do this because he is skilful and tactically aware.

Will you be staying with that tactical formation?

You have to see how the opponents are playing, but it's important for me always to follow the Dutch tradition: create an extra man, play with outside wingers who have the freedom to come inside and keep their positions on the field. But in international football right now, you cannot afford to be stubborn and play with just the one system. You have to change things to create an advantage. Many of my players are multi-functional. We have many players who can do different jobs, and that's good.

Is it a concern to you that some of your players at Barcelona are not playing regular first-team football?

Of course I am concerned. But I do my job, I travel to Barcelona, I talk with my players. At the moment I can live with it because Barcelona are playing so many games. However, if the players do not play for more than a month, then we have a problem. The players then start to lose their natural rhythm.

Barça coach Louis Van Gaal is Dutch. Have you talked about it with him?
Yes, but we keep it secret. However, the communication is there.

It can be a benefit in a tournament if a player is not exhausted after a long season...
It can go both ways. I prefer a player who feels good because he is playing often and is in good shape. On the other hand, if a player is not playing he will not be burned out at the end of a season.

How does it feel to have won a match after going 11 games without a victory?
I was relieved, not for me but for the players. They needed a victory. I have not felt any pressure. I only feel pressure if I feel we are not progressing well, if we – Johan Neeskens and I – are not working well, if we feel that we don't have a grip on the squad. That's pressure.

But it couldn't have been a pleasant experience for you?
No, but we still have more friendly matches to play. We are on the right track now. It's possible that in the next game there will be other players introduced.

Did you choose to play Germany in the hope that the rivalry might produce a little extra from your team?
I don't know. We choose all our opponents very carefully, and I can see more against a strong opponent than against a weak opponent.

What sort of things have you learned during your time as national coach?
I have learned to live with the pressure and work with the players as human beings. Of course, I know what kind of man I am. I have had to take a good look at myself.

And then you have to consider your style of coaching. It's important: my style of coaching is that I concentrate on my system, on the team. I need good people around me who I can rely on and who I can work with. I have this team in place. Everything is well organised. So nothing has been a big surprise.

Has your team improved since the 1998 World Cup in France?
It's too early to say, but if we want to play a good Euro 2000, we must be at least as good as in France. I already told you that they have different types of qualities. But they are also the right age, 26 to 28, and they are experienced. For this generation of footballers, it is the perfect situation. The conditions are in place for them to play a great tournament. The goal for them is to make history with the national team. They have already made history with their clubs because they have won national Leagues and European Cups. So this is the right moment for this generation to prove something with the national team.

Striding out...Seedorf and Co looked impressive against Germany

So there is no other option than victory this summer?
It's our goal but that should come as no surprise – all the other countries have that goal. As I already said, everybody can beat everybody else.

We can win – if the spirit is right, if the tactics are right, if the motivation is okay. It will be a hard tournament. In the opening round of a World Cup, you can draw with the weaker countries and still reach the next round. But at the European Championship, most of the teams are of a very high level. There's not a big difference between the countries.

Do you have better players than other countries?
No, take Portugal. They have fantastic players. They have Figo, Conceicao, Rui Costa, all playing for top teams in Europe. It's the same as the Dutch players. They have fantastic potential. There are many other countries who have this potential – France, for example. They have wonderful players playing in Italy.

But technically the Dutch players are better...
No, I wouldn't say that. We are working hard for a good performance this summer. I am concentrating on my team and I have the highest respect for other countries. What's important is to have a good team.

Some great players who become coaches find life frustrating because they have to work with players who are not as talented as they were. How have you found life as a coach?
Coaching is wonderful. It gives me so much satisfaction. I can say 100 things and if I see just one thing change, if I make just one improvement, it really makes me feel good. Of course, I can understand that it can get frustrating if things are not working – that's life. If everything in life worked 100 per cent there would be no challenges any more. It's a hard job, of course, but I'm working with human beings, and I like that a lot. I like talking to my players, I like the relationships that develop. It's difficult because with 20 people you can never give attention to everybody. I try to do my best. It's not always easy. There will be times when I will fail, but it's my job and I'm enjoying it.

As a player, did you understand the role of the coach?
Yes. As well as observing tactics, I always watched the way the coaches behaved. As a player I always observed the coach, mainly because I wanted to make fun out of him! I was the first one to notice if the coach had a certain habit, so that I could make a joke out of it! Now, if I say something to a player and I see a little twinkle in his eye, it reminds me of myself as a player.

Do they imitate you?
No, of course not! You can see when players are joking. The only difference now as a coach is that I don't react. I just do my own thing and when we are together I don't crack jokes. That's the difference between being a coach and a player. When players have their free time, I try to leave them alone. The gap between me and the players is not that big, but I have to respect their space.

Is it difficult to make that change?
No, you just have to do it. Before I took the job, I knew that I would have to do these things. You know that you have to switch, you have to do the things you know are best. I think I'm growing at it, it's becoming more natural.

Most players don't understand the role of the coach, do they?
Yes, that's true. If you have two or three players in a team who really understand what the coach is thinking, that's good. Through them you can direct the team on the pitch. In training you can talk with them and explain the meaning of the training session. They can react because they understand you.

Is coaching a born talent?
No, I don't think so. Experience helps a lot. If you have grown up with football, if you have had a career of 15 years as a player, it is more likely that you can become a coach because you know so many things. But it's not the same for everybody. There are some born coaches, but you can also become one. It just takes time.

Summer special...Rijkaard and fellow national coaches get a feel for the Euro trophy

Can you borrow from the style and tactics of coaches like Sacchi or Cruyff?
Yes, of course. In my situation right now, the Dutch footballing philosophy is most important. You can take ingredients from Italian football, from Sacchi, for instance, in defensive situations. I get great satisfaction from teaching players how to defend. So I take things from Italy, and from Cruyff and Van Gaal. But the most important thing is to be yourself.

In the beginning it must be hard. If you don't have the experience, you have to borrow tactical ideas from other coaches.
Yes, but before you look at tactics, it's important to look at your players. If you want to play one-on-one tactics in defence, but you haven't got the players to do that, then you are going to have problems. It's been perfect for me that I have had all these friendly games in which I can try out tactics.

You seem to be a man of few words. How do you get your message across to the players?
Well, I can be a man like that, but when I am with people I like I will use more than one word! As a coach you have to explain things like tactics to the players. As well as team talks, I put a lot of time and effort into personally talking to the players so there is no misunderstanding. As a player I always hated it when a coach did something and then did not explain it.

Do you have a player who is your representative on the pitch?
I use a lot of players. Davids is important, so are Ronald and Frank De Boer, and Cocu as well. And if Winter is playing, he's experienced and he will be in contact with the bench.

What do you think about some of the teams who are being tipped for success at Euro 2000 – Spain, for example?
I have not seen much of them, but Camacho has been getting some great results and he is doing a great job. He has a lot of good players to choose from.

There are a lot of Dutchmen playing in Spanish football...
Well, it's all over Europe. It's a fact of life. In Italy, there are a lot of foreigners. In Holland, there are a lot of foreigners. In Germany, there are a lot of foreigners. Europe's borders are open now, we can travel and work where we want to. The clubs are buying these players because they are the right price. If it brings you success it has to be good for football. In England, the foreign players have brought something different to the game. Europe is becoming one, and that's good for football.

It can't be good for national teams, though?
I wouldn't say that. In the past, Denmark won the European Championship in Sweden with a team made up of players who were playing abroad. They came from everywhere and they still won. Normally, players are very keen and happy to play for their national team.

But there are growing conflicts between clubs and countries.
That's another issue. It's important to create a timetable that's logical for all the countries and all the players to play their national games at the same time. I believe the authorities are working on it.

Would you be interested in working as a club coach?
Yes, of course, in the future. My situation at the moment is very intense. I have a very important job to do. It's no use talking about the future. First prove yourself and then see what the future brings.

Coaching a club would be totally different for you.
Yes, working with a club side you have more time, you work with the players on a daily basis. As I said earlier in this discussion, quality alone is not enough. But I still have a job to do with the Dutch national side. And if the players do what they have to do, and keep things simple, we can do the most beautiful things. But you need to keep on communicating that to the players. Otherwise even good players will do whatever they think is best.

With the national team you have less time to work with the players. You are only with them for two days. They play club matches on a Sunday, they arrive on the Monday, but you can't do much because they need to rest – rest is so important. You only have Tuesday to explain your technical moves. And then on the Wednesday it's the game and they go away again.

Is that enough to prepare a team for the European Championship?
Well, it's a fact of life, we have to deal with it.

You've mentioned Portugal a lot. Why?
Portugal are like Holland, with a lot of important players playing abroad. They have a wonderful team, but it is a different style of play to ours. They like to stay behind the ball and play the counter. If they had a good centre-forward maybe that would make the difference.

The Dutch team played some of the best football at the 1998 World Cup. Why was that?
As I have already said, quality is not enough. You need to have the right team spirit. In 1996 there was tension in the team. In 1998 the team spirit was OK. The mentality of the players was OK. As a reward for that they had a good tournament. The players in 1996 were the same as 1998, only the mentality was different. Credit for that must go to Guus Hiddink.

How do you keep team spirit high?
I keep my eyes open and do everything I can to make it a beautiful event for the players, make sure they can relax. Guus Hiddink started it and we are continuing that. The players enjoy coming to play for the national team.

Will you be making any more changes to the team between now and summer?
We still have to grow as a team. Against Germany I saw a few things that need to improve. But I like to keep things between me and my players. I see it as a way of keeping the trust between us.

What do you think of the proposed Atlantic League?
A lot of people are talking about it, but nothing is certain. I can understand why the smaller clubs feel this way. But we have to see how the national Leagues will fare. I don't know if it is a good thing. Italian, German, Spanish and English teams would never pull out of their own Leagues.

You've been very critical of young players leaving Dutch football too soon, haven't you?
Yes. If a young player has played two or three seasons in his own country in the first team, then he is ready to leave, as a player and as a person. In the past there were young players leaving at 18 or 19 and you never heard of them again. I would prefer them to leave at 22 or 23. In my day it was 25 or 26. Many are leaving too soon and they are missing a part of their education. But they play one year in the first team and think they are a big star. They are being too ambitious.

Do you worry about the future of Dutch football?
No, I am not afraid because Holland is a footballing country. But at the moment the gap between the youth team and the first team is growing. It used to be natural for a talented 17-year-old to go into the first team. We need to address the situation.

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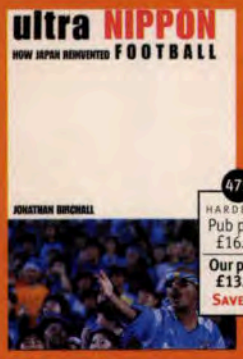

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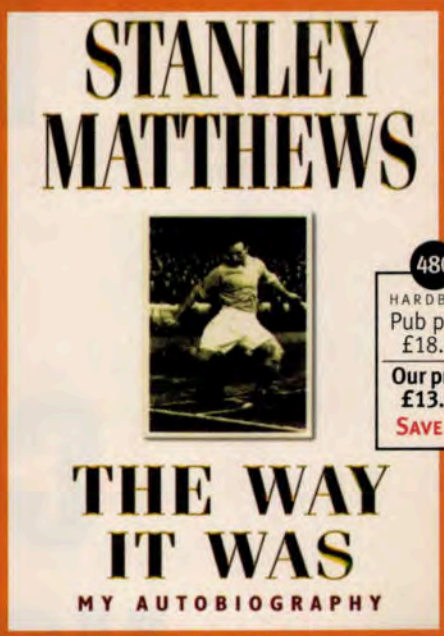

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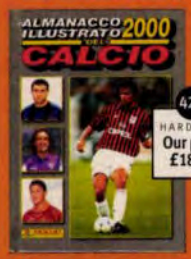

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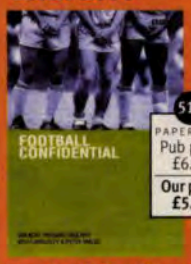

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WORLD SOCCER

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

All or nothing

The draw for the quarter-finals of the Champions League has thrown up some intriguing possibilities, says Gavin Hamilton

Tight race...Bayern Munich face FC Porto

AN ALL-SPANISH or all-English Final remains a strong possibility after the draw for the quarter-finals of the UEFA Champions League.

European champions Manchester United will meet seven-times champions Real Madrid, while Chelsea were paired with Barcelona.

Last year's runners-up Bayern Munich face FC Porto, a repeat of the 1987 Champions Cup Final. In the fourth match, Lazio will play the third Spanish side in the draw, Valencia.

Barcelona, top scorers with 36 goals and the only team in the competition to remain unbeaten, have been installed as the favourites to win the Final in Paris on May 24.

A 'Dream Final' – where the Spanish champions play Champions Cup-holders United – would provide a showcase ending to a competition which has only come to life in fits and starts so far.

Now, with the knockout stages looming, we have some proper ties to get our teeth into.

Real Madrid president Lorenzo Sanz summed up the mood: "The last two champions of Europe meeting – you cannot get bigger than that. We're very happy. It's the draw the players and fans wanted. It will be an absolutely huge match but I still predict Real-Barcelona in an all-Spanish final."

Barcelona were originally paired with Porto and Chelsea with Bayern Munich. But because Porto and Barcelona met in the second group phase and could not play each other in the quarter-finals, the matches were re-allocated, Chelsea being paired with Barcelona and Porto with Bayern.

Chelsea's managing director Colin Hutchinson said: "If you are first paired with Bayern and then Barcelona you can see this is a competition with some very classy teams.

"We will obviously start as the underdogs but we're looking forward to it immensely."

Naturally, Barcelona coach Louis Van Gaal said he was happy with the draw: "I'm very pleased, but only because the three Spanish teams were kept apart. That's very positive for Spanish football.

"Chelsea are a very strong side. I saw them against Feyenoord and there was a big difference in quality there. It should be a good game. Chelsea always want to attack, just like Barcelona."

Chelsea have met Barcelona once before, losing an Inter-Cities Fairs Cup semi-final play-off 5-0 after a 2-2 draw on aggregate in 1965-66.

For Bayern Munich, their meeting with Porto will be a chance to gain revenge for their shock defeat in the 1987 Final.

Bayern Munich vice-president Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, who played for Bayern in that match, said: "In 1987 they beat us 2-1 in the Final when we were favourites and thought we would win. It is good to have the chance to avenge that defeat."

Lazio, the sole Italian representatives left in European competition, were pleased with the draw. Massimo Cragnotti, Lazio's vice-president, said: "It's a good draw and Valencia are a good team. But Lazio have everything we need to get through."

THE DRAW

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: THE QUARTER-FINAL DRAW

Chelsea (Eng) v Barcelona (Spa)
Valencia (Spa) v Lazio (Ita)
Real Madrid (Spa) v Manchester United (Eng)
FC Porto (Por) v Bayern Munich (Ger)

SCHEDULE: QUARTER-FINALS, FIRST LEGS

Tuesday, April 4
Real Madrid v Manchester United
FC Porto v Bayern Munich
Wednesday, April 5
Chelsea v Barcelona
Valencia v Lazio

QUARTER-FINALS, SECOND LEGS

Tuesday, April 18
Barcelona v Chelsea
Lazio v Valencia
Wednesday, April 19
Manchester United v Real Madrid
Bayern Munich v FC Porto

SEMI-FINALS, FIRST LEGS

Tuesday, May 2
Lazio/Valencia v Barcelona/Chelsea
Wednesday, May 3
Manchester United/Real Madrid v Bayern/Porto

SEMI-FINALS, SECOND LEGS:

Tuesday, May 9
Bayern/Porto v Manchester United/Real Madrid
Wednesday, May 10
Barcelona/Chelsea v Lazio/Valencia

FINAL (PARIS)

Wednesday, May 24

UEFA CUP: THE SEMI-FINAL DRAW

Galatasaray (Tur) v Leeds United (Eng)
Arsenal (Eng) v Lens (Fra)
Ties to be played on April 6 and 20.
Final: May 17 in Copenhagen

● An all-English Final in the UEFA Cup remains a possibility after Arsenal and Leeds were kept apart in the semi-final draw.

Arsenal, comfortable winners over Werder Bremen in the quarter-finals, were installed as favourites to win Europe's second cup competition after being drawn against Lens.

For the Highbury side, the semi-final meeting with the French is a chance to avenge their poor results in last season's Champions League. Lens grabbed an injury-time equaliser to draw 1-1 at home and then beat Arsenal 1-0 at Wembley in the return. Those results effectively cost Arsenal a place in the quarter-finals.

Arsenal have appealed to UEFA over Thierry Henry's sending-off against Werder Bremen. The young striker could be prevented from appearing in the semi-final, but Arsenal felt Henry was harshly treated by Danish ref Kim Milton-Nielsen.

Lens reached the semi-finals after beating Celta Vigo. After a goalless first leg, the French fought back from a goal down to win 2-1, with the winner coming from Pascal Nouma.

Galatasaray stand between Leeds, comfortable winners over Slavia Prague, and a possible all-English Final in Copenhagen on May 17. Mete Razlikli, technical director at Galatasaray, said: "We did not mind who we drew. If we win the trophy it will be the first time that [current] national champions will have won the UEFA Cup.

"Victory will be a major boost not just for us but Turkish football as a whole."

This year's UEFA Cup will have a non-Italian winner for only the fourth time in 12 years. The competition has been dominated by Italian clubs in recent years, with all-Serie A finals in 1990, 1991, 1995 and 1998.

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Lucky seven

'Unknown' Figo is among the best, says Keir Radnedge

Driving force...Figo is a vital figure at Barça

ONLY two Portuguese players have had the honour of lifting the European Champions Cup. The first was centre-forward Jose Aguas, captain of Benfica in 1961 and 1962. The second was right-back Joao Pinto, skipper of the FC Porto side who came from behind to beat Bayern Munich in 1987.

Now there may be a third to keep them company: Luis Filipe Madeira Caeiro Figo, old-fashioned outside-right and captain of Spanish champions Barcelona ever since home-grown midfielder Pep Guardiola fell foul of coach Louis Van Gaal.

Figo is the one Barcelona player who has stayed in favour through the reigns of Johan Cruyff, Bobby Robson and Van Gaal. Yet, oddly, it was almost entirely by accident that he joined Barça.

Figo, born in Lisbon on November 4, 1972, was already an established international forward with four goals in 23 matches when both Parma and Juventus came calling at his then club, Sporting Lisbon, in the spring of 1995. That was where business became murky. Figo signed one contract, his agent another. Both Italian clubs claimed his services.

The case went to FIFA, which ruled both agreements invalid and banned Figo from a move to Italian football for two years. That suited Barcelona, who jumped in to snap him up for a bargain £1.5million. In today's inflated market, a player of Figo's calibre and character would not go for anything less than 10 times that sum. Unofficially, Barcelona officials say that Figo, right now, would be worth around £20million or more on the open market.

Not that the market for this particular player is open. Figo has a long-term contract which does not expire until June 2005.

So far he has played around 170 of a possible 190 League matches under three highly contrasting coaches, scoring 28 goals – including a personal best seven already this season. Hardly surprisingly, Figo does not regret the way in which fate diverted his career to La Liga instead of to Serie A.

He says: "It's like destiny. When I decided I wanted to leave Sporting Lisbon the possibility of joining Barcelona was non-existent. For various reasons the future I had expected did not emerge and Barcelona came in for me.

"I must say, however, that if they had been bidding from the start then I would have signed for them with my eyes shut."

Given the icy state of the relationship between Cruyff – the most successful coach

Hitting the heights...Figo in action in La Liga

in Barcelona history – and Van Gaal, Figo is used to being asked, mischievously, to choose between them. Calling upon all the diplomatic skills demanded of a captain of Barcelona, he says: "Look, with Cruyff I felt I had just landed in a new football world. We were together at Barcelona for only one season but I learned an enormous amount in that time.

"He has particular views about how the game should be played and how a team should use the full width and breadth of the pitch.

"From Van Gaal I have also learned a great deal, about tactical discipline and hard work.

"Two very different coaches but I could not choose between them; I matured as a footballer under both."

Only three other Barcelona players survive from the Cruyff era – central defender Abelardo, left-back Sergi, and Guardiola. All three have been in and out of the side this season through injury or tactical preference. Figo, however, rejects suggestions that he enjoys some sort of favoured status.

He says: "Certainly, I have always been in the first team as long as I have been fit, and I have been fortunate with injuries. But I don't kid myself. I know the world of football very well. If I don't play well then I will be dropped. It's the inevitable rule of the game at this level.

"Barcelona have a squad full of wonderful players. You always have to be at your best. All I concentrate on is working as hard as I can all the time so that the coach keeps picking me."

Admirers in Catalan football circles describe Figo as the least-known of the world's finest players, because Portuguese football does not command the high profile of a Spain, a Holland or a Brazil. But Figo is not fazed. He can look at the trophy cabinet in his home.

Beyond that he says: "A Brazilian or a Spanish player has better chances of appearing at the highest level because they are always present in the finals tournaments of World Cups and South American or European Championships. But an individual player can be recognised on his own merits.

"Look at Andrii Shevchenko, for example. He is acknowledged as one of the finest players in the world and he comes from Ukraine, who have never been in any of the big finals."

Figo is proud of being Barcelona captain – "Unbelievable, really. Millions of people would love to be in my shoes" – and happy to play wide right if that suits the club, though it would not be his choice.

Team-mate Rivaldo, notoriously, is a lot less happy at being ordered by Van Gaal to play wide left, but Figo refuses to rock the tactical and technical boat.

He says: "My squad number has always been seven, even when I was at Sporting Lisbon. Traditionally it was the number of the old-fashioned outside-right. In fact, I never played in that position for Sporting, where I played much more like an inside-forward, linking midfield with the centre-forward. That position does not really exist at Barcelona.

"Perhaps if I return to Portuguese football one day I will go back to my old position, but that's not what matters at the moment." What does matter is Barcelona's treble assault on Champions League, Spanish League and Spanish Cup. "We are going to try to win all three," says Figo. "Difficult – but not impossible."

Easy does it for Barça

BARCELONA cruised into the quarter-finals of the Champions League, with coach Louis Van Gaal insisting: "The pressure is starting to build now – and that's perfect for us.

"It's going to get more and more difficult as the season goes on. But we're more used to coping with this sort of pressure, so we've got a pretty good set of cards at the moment."

Van Gaal has had to deal with the full fury of the Catalan fans and press in recent months after persisting with some controversial selections.

But the return of the popular Pep Guardiola has coincided with a return to form at home and in Europe. Guardiola, controversially dropped by Van Gaal after December's 3-2 League defeat by Sevilla, was particularly influential in the 4-2 home victory over FC Porto in the second group phase of the Champions League.

"That was the best Barcelona have played since I've been at the club," enthused Van Gaal afterwards. "We played so well in the first half against Porto that it's difficult for any side to stop us."

Defender Frank De Boer added: "The way that we are playing must make us one of the favourites for the Champions League, and I think you are going to see a lot more from us."

World Player of the Year Rivaldo bagged two of the goals, one an expertly-taken free-kick, the other a brilliant solo run and shot.

A week later, Barça's place in the Champions League quarter-finals was secured with a 2-0 victory in Oporto, the goals coming from Abelardo and Rivaldo (another free-kick).

Ironically, top spot in Group A was ensured by two of the young players who Van Gaal has championed in preference to senior players such as Guardiola.

Midfielder Gabri, in for the injured Luis Enrique, weighed in with two goals against Sparta Prague on the final matchday to add to his goal in the 3-1 defeat of Hertha Berlin a week earlier. In that match, 20-year-old Xavi, playing in place of the injured Guardiola, had also been on target.

The win over Sparta ensured that Barcelona were the only team left in this year's competition with an unbeaten record. They also finished as top scorers with 36 goals.

For Van Gaal, this season's European campaign stands in stark contrast to the previous two years, when Barça were eliminated early on.

The Dutchman was linked by the Italian press with a possible move to Lazio next year after he was spotted in Rome last month. But he explained the rumours away, saying he had been in the Italian capital to record a TV commercial. "There's no truth in any reports that I'll be going to Lazio," Van Gaal said. "But soon you are going to see a brilliant actor."

● FC Porto finished second in the group after a brilliant second-half goal from substitute Ferreira Clayton sealed a 1-0 win at Hertha Berlin in the final group match.

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

GROUP B REVIEW

United through, but Trap bows out

DEFENDING champions Manchester United had captain Roy Keane and striker Andy Cole to thank for guiding them into the quarter-finals along with second-placed Valencia, and at the expense of Fiorentina and Bordeaux.

United clinched top spot in the group after a goalless draw in Valencia in their final match. A week earlier, goals from Keane, Cole and Dwight Yorke in a thrilling 3-1 win over Fiorentina had booked the champions' place in the knockout phase.

Fiorentina had taken an early lead with a superb shot from Gabriel Batistuta. But in a pulsating match, United responded with two first-half goals. Yorke added a third halfway through the second half after Fiorentina's Fabio Rossitto had been sent off.

Cole's goal against Fiorentina, his 14th in the Champions Cup, equalled Denis Law's club record.

Valencia claimed second place in the group after comprehensive wins over Fiorentina (2-0 at home) and Bordeaux (4-1 away). A wonderful run, turn and shot from Romanian Adrian Ilie gave the Spanish side the edge over the Italians, with Gaizka Mendieta adding the second goal in injury time.

Valencia crushed Bordeaux in their next match. Defender Miroslav Djukic put them 1-0 up just before half-time, and shortly after the break Bordeaux's Nisa Saveljic was sent off for bringing down Juan Sanchez. Mendieta converted the penalty, with Kily Gonzalez and Sanchez completing the scoring.

Fiorentina's exit from the competition signalled the end of coach Giovanni Trapattoni's time in Florence.

As expected, Trap, the most successful coach in Serie A history, announced that he would step down at the season's close. "I realised six months ago that my time in Florence was up," he said after a 3-3 draw with Bordeaux in the final game. "In any case, coaches are like fish. After a while, they start to smell."

Beyond saving...Bordeaux lost home and away to Man United

Well beaten...Bayern thumped Real 4-1 in Munich

GROUP C REVIEW

Matthaus leaves Bayern in fine form

REAL MADRID did just enough to join group winners Bayern in the quarter-finals by winning 1-0 away against Rosenborg in the final game. This result, coupled with Kyiv Dynamo's 2-0 win against a weakened Bayern – already assured of top spot – meant that the Spanish and Ukrainian sides finished level on points. But Real's superior head-to-head record secured their place in the last eight.

An early goal by the consistently outstanding Raul was enough to settle the game in Trondheim. Steve McManaman also played well, hitting a post late in the first half and showing an impressive workrate following team-mate Guti's dismissal.

Bayern cruised through to the quarter-finals, winning the group by three points despite their last-day defeat and the departure after four matches of the talismanic Lothar Matthaus. The world's most-capped player certainly went out in style, helping Bayern to a 4-1 home victory over Real Madrid before leaving to join MetroStars. Mehmet Scholl and Giovane Elber gave the German side a first-half lead, and though Ivan Helguera pulled one back for Real, the in-form Alexander Zickler scored twice to ensure a convincing victory.

Kyiv could consider themselves unlucky to go out, since they had a better goal difference than the leaky Real Madrid, though they had qualified for the second phase with the fewest number of points of any of the last 16.

Rosenborg, who won their first-phase group, got their only point against Bayern at home in the opening game.

GROUP D REVIEW

Lazio restore some Italian pride

LAZIO were in danger of missing out on the quarter-finals after losing at home to Feyenoord on the third matchday and gaining only a point in the return the following week. But they then switched on the style, thrashing Marseille 5-1 in Rome and following up with a 2-1 victory away to Chelsea in the final round.

Not only did the result put them on top of the group, but it also meant that they were the last surviving Italian club in Europe this season. In addition, they became the first team to beat Chelsea in a European match at Stamford Bridge, a run of 33 games over 42 years.

The situation had looked a lot different when Gustavo Poyet put Chelsea ahead just before half-time. Lazio had to win the game to ensure qualification and certainly could not afford to lose since Feyenoord, within a point of them

Up in the air...Lazio's Pavel Nedved goes flying against Chelsea

in the table, had a better head-to-head record. But Simone Inzaghi – scorer of four in the rout of Marseille a week earlier – snatched an equaliser 10 minutes into the second half, and a spectacular free-kick by Sinisa Mihajlovic completed a well-deserved victory. Lazio's night in London was marred only by Fernando Couto's dismissal seven minutes from time.

Chelsea, who started the game against Lazio without a single Englishman in their ranks, still progressed to the next stage, but their confidence might well have been badly shaken. They will also go into the first leg against Barcelona without Frank Leboeuf, who is suspended.

Feyenoord could muster only a point from their visit to Marseille in the final game, which would have been enough to see them into the last eight had Lazio succumbed to Chelsea. However, the Dutch were always going to be reliant on a slip-up by the Italians after losing 3-1 at home to Chelsea in Rotterdam on matchday five. Marseille's only bright spot was a 1-0 home win over Chelsea.

For group match line-ups and tables, see World Service, starting page 35

Stats and facts

LEADING SCORERS

8 JARDEL, FC Porto; RIVALDO, Barcelona; Serhii REBROV, Kyiv Dynamo; Simone INZAGHI, Lazio
7 RAUL, Real Madrid
6 Gabriel BATISTUTA, Fiorentina; LUIS ENRIQUE, Barcelona; Patrick KLUIVERT, Barcelona; Roy KEANE, Manchester United
5 Fernando MORIENTES, Real Madrid; John CAREW, Rosenborg; PAULO SERGIO, Bayern Munich; Tore Andre FLO, Chelsea
4 Abel BALBO, Fiorentina; Andrei TIKHONOV, Spartak Moscow; Artem BEZRODNIY, Spartak Moscow; Dennis WISE, Chelsea; GABRI, Barcelona; GIOVANNI, Olympiakos; HAKAN SUKUR, Galatasaray; Jan Derek SORENSEN, Rosenborg; Jon Dahl TOMASSON, Feyenoord; KILY GONZALEZ, Valencia; ROBERTO CARLOS, Real Madrid; SAVIO, Real Madrid; Sylvain WILTORD, Bordeaux; Ulf KIRSTEN, Bayer Leverkusen; Vratislav LOKVENC, Sparta Prague

SHOTS ON GOAL

27 Claudio LOPEZ, Valencia; RIVALDO, Barcelona
25 John CAREW, Rosenborg; Sylvain WILTORD, Bordeaux
24 Luis FIGO, Barcelona; RAUL, Real Madrid
23 Gianfranco ZOLA, Chelsea
22 Simone INZAGHI, Lazio
20 Serhii REBROV, Kyiv Dynamo
19 JARDEL, FC Porto; ROBERTO CARLOS, Real Madrid
18 Fernando MORIENTES, Real Madrid; Patrick KLUIVERT, Barcelona
17 Tore Andre FLO, Chelsea
16 Andy COLE, Manchester United; Gabriel BATISTUTA, Fiorentina

ASSISTS

7 Luis FIGO, Barcelona
4 Claudio LOPEZ, Valencia; David BECKHAM, Manchester United; Nwankwo KANU, Arsenal
3 Andrii SHEVCHENKO, Milan; Bent SKAMMELSRUD, Rosenborg; Bonaventure KALOU, Feyenoord; DECO, FC Porto; Yegor TITOV, Spartak Moscow; ESQUERDINHA, FC Porto; EVANILSON, Borussia Dortmund; Fernando MORIENTES, Real Madrid; ROBERTO CARLOS, Real Madrid; Sergio CONCEICAO, Lazio; Stefan EFFENBERG, Bayern Munich; Stephane DALMAT, Marseille; Valentin BIALKEVICH, Kyiv Dynamo

FOULS COMMITTED

39 Orjan BERG, Rosenborg
35 Milan FUKAL, Sparta Prague
33 Petr GABRIEL, Sparta Prague
33 Tore Andre FLO, Chelsea
29 Didier DESCHAMPS, Chelsea; John CAREW, Rosenborg; Miroslav BARANEK, Sparta Prague
27 Amedeo CARBONI, Valencia
26 Martin HASEK, Sparta Prague
25 Julio CRUZ, Feyenoord; Marcel DESAILLY, Chelsea
24 Andrii HUSIN, Kyiv Dynamo; Bonaventure KALOU, Feyenoord; Dennis WISE, Chelsea; Lassina DIABATE, Bordeaux
23 Fernando REDONDO, Real Madrid; Johan MICOUD, Bordeaux; Pavel NEDVED, Lazio

YELLOW CARDS

5 David BECKHAM, Manchester United
4 Dejan STANKOVIC, Lazio; Gabriel BATISTUTA, Fiorentina; Geri CIPI, Maribor; Giuseppe PANCARO, Lazio; Kakha KALADZE, Kyiv Dynamo; Martin HASEK, Sparta Prague; Paul BOSVELT, Feyenoord; PAULINHO SANTOS, FC Porto; Sinisa MIHAJLOVIC, Lazio

RED CARDS

2 Yuri KOVTUN, Spartak Moscow
1 Andrei TIKHONOV, Spartak Moscow; Bjorn Otto BRAGSTAD, Rosenborg; Chris SUTTON, Chelsea; Claudio TAFFAREL, Galatasaray; Fabio ROSSITTO, Fiorentina; Fernando COUTO, Lazio; Geri CIPI, Maribor; Gilles GRIMANDI, Arsenal; GUTI, Real Madrid; Herve ALICARTE, Bordeaux; Jens JEREMIES, Bayern Munich; Kees VAN WONDEREN, Feyenoord; Kostas KONSTANTINIDIS, Hertha Berlin; Lars RICKEN, Borussia Dortmund; Lilian LASLANDES, Bordeaux; Mark VAN BOMMEL, PSV Eindhoven; Martin HASEK, Sparta Prague; NILTON, Boavista; Nisa SAVELJIC, Bordeaux; Patrick BLONDEAU, Marseille; PAULINHO SANTOS, FC Porto; Richard MARTINI, Marseille; ROBSON, Spartak Moscow; Sebastien PEREZ, Marseille; Tomas GALASEK, Willem II; WILLIAM ANDEM, Boavista; Yannick FISCHER, Marseille

Statistics include first group phase matches

The men who matter

David Trezeguet

The top French striker has all the motivation he needs, says Nick Bidwell

FRENCH international striker David Trezeguet has every chance of receiving a belated wedding present from his national coach, Roger Lemerre – a place in his country's starting line-up at Euro 2000.

While other contenders for a French attacking spot, such as the Bordeaux trio of Sylvain Wiltord, Lilian Laslandes and Christophe Dugarry, have struggled to achieve their maximum potency of late, Trezeguet's European Championship auditions have proved to be infinitely more compelling.

All season long he has been in or around top spot in the French scoring charts – at the time of writing his total for runaway leaders Monaco stood at 18 – and after initial difficulties finding his feet at international level, he is now shaping up to be the natural marksman the French have craved for years.

Trezeguet scored the winner when France secured their Euro 2000 ticket with a 3-2 home win over Iceland in their final qualifier, and although his partnership with Wiltord certainly did not fire on all cylinders in a recent friendly victory against Poland in Paris, he still cut the figure of a sharp and able front-runner.

As the Euro 2000 kick-off looms closer, the 22-year-old Trezeguet – born in France but raised in Argentina before being spotted by Monaco at 17 – increasingly appears to be the most effective of the French front line. However, he says: "There's at least seven or eight guys fighting to play up front. Nobody definitely in, nobody definitely out. Between now and when the squad is announced in May, I have to convince the coach that I'm the one.

"Playing for France is so important for me. It couldn't be any other way after taking part in the national team's incredible adventure at the 98 World Cup. When you taste football at the very top, in a squad who win the world title, you just can't live without the national team."

Trezeguet's anti-complacency game plan is easily understood. After exploding on to the French scene with Monaco in 1997-98 – 18 League goals, plus four as his club reached the Champions League semi-finals – and playing in all his nation's games at World Cup 98 bar the Final, he seemed to have it made. Yet last season was largely an anti-climax.

He managed a dozen League goals, but sloppy form and a sulk over Monaco's refusal to allow him

Alessandro Nesta

Paddy Agnew on the defender who has quickly become indispensable to Italy

Assured...Alessandro Nesta

ONE afternoon in mid-November 1995, Alessandro Nesta was on a ferry on his way to the island of Elba with friends when his mobile phone rang. His club, Lazio, had tracked him down and told him to do an about turn and head back to mainland Italy because Under-21 manager Cesare Maldini wanted him for a European Championship qualifier.

For Nesta, then 19, that phone call was the start of a bright international career. Brought in for a 2-0 win against Ukraine that saw Italy's Under-21 side qualify for the final stages of the tournament, Nesta immediately became a regular.

Six months later, on a warm May night in Barcelona, he scored the final and decisive goal in a penalty shoot-out against Spain that saw Maldini's Italy win the Under-21 European title.

Nesta had arrived – so effectively, in fact, that within days of that success he had received a call-up from then senior team manager, Arrigo Sacchi, who included him in the Italian 22 for Euro 96.

In the end, Sacchi did not use Nesta in England but did give him his first cap three months later in a World Cup qualifier, away to Moldova.

By the time that World Cup run had concluded, Nesta had become an automatic starter. The young Lazio defender's progress in the national team had been much helped by the fact that, just before Christmas 1996, Sacchi resigned and was replaced by Maldini, a man who knew all he needed to know about Nesta.

The current Italy coach, Dino Zoff, is also only too familiar with Nesta. It was Zoff who, as Lazio coach, sent the defender out for his Serie A debut as a substitute away to Udinese in March 1994, just six days before his 18th birthday.

"I remember that Alessandro was trembling like a leaf," Zoff recalls. "But when he got on the pitch, he was fine. I've never had any doubts about his ability."

Two weeks after that, Nesta first made international headlines, and not for the happiest of reasons. He was the reserve player against whom Paul Gascoigne unwisely attempted a sliding tackle in a training game, breaking his own leg.

As the Englishman was stretchered off to hospital, Nesta burst into tears. In the end, Gascoigne had to console Nesta, telling him "it wasn't your fault".

Zoff, Maldini and Sacchi all saw the same outstanding quality in Nesta that had been obvious to Roma talent scouts who had spotted him as a 10-year-old playing for his local team, Cinecitta Calcio.

Roma were so sure of his talent that they offered Cinecitta £4,000 as a holding fee to 'keep' the boy for another four years, when he could move on to Roma's youth scheme.

Nesta's father, railway worker Giuseppe, was less than convinced. He had been a lifelong Lazio supporter; it went against the grain to see his pride and joy sign for the loathed, cross-town rivals. So he stood by his club loyalties and, four years later, took his boy along to a Lazio trial. Nesta proceeded to play his way into a contract with his current club.

Looking sharp...David Trezeguet

to join Roma restricted him to two national team appearances.

"The on-off move to Roma distracted me and I could have no complaints that I lost my place in the senior squad to Nico Anelka and to Wiltord," he said.

"But now everything has settled down for me. I've signed a new deal to keep me at Monaco until 2004, for the first time in five years I had a proper break from football last summer, and I'm scoring lots of goals for a competitive and attack-minded Monaco team on their way to the League title.

"My winner against Iceland was very important. I couldn't have chosen a better way to mark my return to the French team, because it put an end to a long period of doubt. I've been given a second chance with the national team and I'm motivated like never before to make the most of it."

Fact file

Country France
Club Monaco
Born October 15, 1977, in Rouen
Previous club Platense (Arg)
International debut February 1998, v Spain
International caps 15 (3 goals)
Honours World Cup 1998; European Under-18 Championship 1996; French League 1997

"I was struck by the way he played, head held high, doing the simple things," recalls Lazio youth team coach Volgango Patarca. "I called his father and told him not to take the boy round to any other clubs. Three weeks later, we had signed him."

In an era when Italian soccer seems short of world-class talent, Alessandro Nesta is one of the few cast-iron certainties for the future. His reading of the game, his timing, his ability to play his way out of defence, his pace and an instinctive element of native arrogance all make him look like by far the most promising young Italian defender to emerge on the scene since the current national team captain, Paolo Maldini.

As a central defender who can play as a sweeper, a marker or a stopper in a back four, Nesta occupies the classic key position where skill can prove vitally reassuring for team-mates.

He comes from the long line of stylish defenders – Moore, Beckenbauer, Krol, Passarella – who can be both tough and creative, break down opposition attacks and make the first move in his own side's offensive play.

It is not for nothing that, despite his relative youth – he is now 24 – Nesta has been Lazio captain for the past two seasons. Poise, aplomb, the combination of Latin flair and Mediterranean cynicism all make Nesta a natural standard bearer.

Nesta has become a vital element both for Lazio and his national side. When Italy lost 3-1 to Belgium in a friendly last November, a game in which the Italian defence had looked especially ingenuous, many pundits pointed to the injury enforced absence of Nesta as a major contributory factor.

To this day, if you ask Lazio coach Sven Goran Eriksson why and how his side lost last season's Serie A title, he will say that April defeats by Roma and Juventus were not the problem: "We lost the title because we dropped a lot of points in the autumn of 1998, at the beginning of the season, at a time when two fundamentally important players were out through injury – Alessandro Nesta and Christian Vieri."

It is not a coincidence that Eriksson names Nesta in the same breath as £31million golden boy Vieri. At the moment, the defender is one of the few players in Italian soccer whose market value would be estimated as equal, if not superior, to that of the Italy forward.

Recent media speculation about a straight Vieri-Nesta swap by Lazio and Inter, Vieri's current club, was probably the work of an overactive imagination but it nonetheless indicated something about the status enjoyed by the young Lazio captain in his native land.

In their last gallop on the major international stage at France 98, Italy looked suspiciously short of quality. That impression was not helped by the fact that Alessandro Nesta went out of the tournament in the first round, injured during Italy's 2-1 win against Austria. (That injury prompted Lazio president Sergio Cragnotti to make the symbolic gesture of sending the Italian federation a 'bill' for £4.5m 'damages' to his star player, though this was subsequently retracted).

If Italy are to improve on their France 98 showing at the Euro 2000 finals, then they will look to players such as Nesta to add a badly needed element of class and assurance.

If Italy go well at Euro 2000, Alessandro Nesta is likely to have had a major say in their good run.

Fact file

Country Italy
Club Lazio
Born March 19, 1976, in Rome
International debut October 1996, v Moldova
International caps 22 (8 goals)
Honours European Under-21 Championship 1996; Cup-winners Cup 1999; Italian Cup 1998

The men who matter

Yves Vanderhaeghe

Klaas-Jan Droppert talks to the Belgian who won his battle at death's door

IF YOU do not believe in miracles, then you have not heard about Yves Vanderhaeghe, the 30-year-old Excelsior Mouscron and Belgium midfielder.

At the age of 18 his career seemed to be over. He was in a coma in hospital and according to the doctors his chances of survival were only five per cent.

But Vanderhaeghe did not surrender. He fought back and is now a key player in coach Robert Waseige's Euro 2000 plans.

WORLD SOCCER: What do you remember about the darkest days of your life?
YVES VANDERHAEGHE: Almost everything! I was 18 and playing for the Third Division club in my home town, Roeselare. During training one day, I collapsed. Before then, for about a month, there had been severe pains in my head and my sight had become worse. I couldn't keep my balance. The doctors didn't know what was wrong, until a scanner discovered a little black spot.

Was it cancer?
That's what the doctors thought, but eventually it proved to be a virus. At first their diagnosis was a brain tumour. They thought it was malignant because my condition got worse and worse. According to the doctors, my chances of survival were only five per cent. One newspaper even published my obituary.

But that wasn't all. On top of it you ended up in a coma.
I had been in hospital for about three or four weeks. Suddenly I felt I was fading. Fortunately my father was there and he warned a nurse. As a last resort they used cortisone. I woke up, but for three weeks I couldn't breathe by myself, I needed a machine to help me.

You had time to think about the future. What were your thoughts?
I considered suicide, thinking "what's my life worth if I won't be able to play sport again?". I didn't want to live like a vegetable for the rest of my life. By then I was nothing more than an old rag. During my period in hospital I lost 44lb and couldn't speak, eat or walk. Even writing was difficult because I was still unbalanced. But deep down I was convinced that if you don't want to die, you're not going to. My character has pulled me through.

Surviving is one thing, but playing football again is another.
Within three weeks, after being released from hospital, I was back on the pitch again. I wasn't allowed to strain myself, but I just couldn't stay at home doing nothing. Football was my life. At first things were difficult. Remember, I had to learn how to walk again. On the pitch, each time I tried to do a little bit more, little by little, until I was back to my old level again.

You've been playing for modest clubs during your entire career so far.
That's right. I started in Roeselare and then went to Cercle Bruges, who

Filling the breach...Jens Jeremies

Jens Jeremies

The player most likely to succeed Lothar Matthaus as Germany's libero speaks to Klaas-Jan Droppert

FOR DECADES, Germany coaches have been looking for a suitable libero. There were likely candidates, but who could ever take over from Franz Beckenbauer, the majestic and charismatic 'Kaiser' who led his team to the World Cup in 1974?

Over the past few years Thomas Helmer, Jens Nowotny and Olaf Thon were tried but all failed. Eventually coach Berti Vogts was forced to put his key player, Lothar Matthaus, in defence.

The veteran needed all his experience to be successful. But his playing days are likely to be over soon, although there is a slim chance he will continue until the World Cup in 2002. If not, who will take over in the World Cup qualifiers? The answer could be his former Bayern Munich team-mate Jens Jeremies, the 26-year-old terrier in midfield.

Since Matthaus headed for New York, Jeremies has been filling the libero position for Bayern – much to the delight of Matthaus, who says: "Jerry is the best possible solution. His play reminds me of mine when I was young."

Certainly Jeremies' workrate is excellent, he never surrenders and he loves to attack. But he has to work on his heading and overall view of the game.

"Of course I want to play libero and I will be ready to take over from Lothar in the national team," he says. "That's up to the coach, Erich Ribbeck. But I've shown I can do the job."

Jeremies knows he will be compared with Matthaus, but says: "That isn't fair. Lothar is world-class, and I'm Jens Jeremies, doing my job as well as I can."

But does he have the skills that inevitably are connected with the libero position? So far he has not been as dominant as he should, but he remains confident. "If I'm making

Recovery...Yves Vanderhaeghe

used to play in the First Division. I made my debut when I was 17. The coach said I could be a key player but I had to wait for a contract until New Year. So I went back to Roeselare, where I could earn a little money, in the Third Division.

Later I went to Excelsior Mouscron in the Second Division, and then to Eendracht Aalst. We had a fantastic year with players like Gilles De Bilde, and finished fourth. The season after that we played in the UEFA Cup but many good players soon left and we battled against relegation for two years. I was the captain but after a conflict with the coach I signed a contract with Mouscron.

But the holding midfielder of the national team should play at Anderlecht or Club Brugge. Aren't they taking notice of you?
I don't think so. Making your debut in the national team at 29 means that you're a late arrival. Don't forget, in my position there were two players of extraordinary class available – Franky Van der Elst and Lorenzo Staelens. Van der Elst retired only last season and Club Brugge bought Coventry's Philippe Clement, who is an international as well. But at Anderlecht there is probably a vacant position and it would be nice if I could fill that gap.

I would like to win a trophy one day. So far, I haven't won anything in my career – not even promotion to the First Division. I've seen many players move to good clubs – De Bilde to Anderlecht and then on to England at Sheffield Wednesday, the Mpenza brothers to Standard. I've always wanted that for myself and I don't think I'm too old. After all, Van der Elst was 38 when he quit Club Brugge.

According to Robert Waseige, you're a key player in midfield. How did you react to his appointment?
At first I had to wait to see if he would select me. A new coach has his own ideas and I wasn't a regular in the national squad in those days. But Waseige said that I was the best candidate to get near Van der Elst.

The previous coach, Georges Leekens, had a lot of critics, but I admit that I was disappointed when he was sacked. The way he worked was fascinating. He could focus on every detail and only stopped when practice had made perfect. I always wanted to learn something from him, because there are always situations where you're making wrong choices.

But I can live with the new coach's approach. Waseige is the sort of man who forces you to be responsible for your own decisions.

Now you will be playing at Euro 2000, which is amazing after all you've been through.
It will be the highlight of my career by a long, long way because I've seen the other side of football – playing in the Third Division in front of 300 spectators, on terrible pitches.

Fact file

Country Belgium
Club Excelsior Mouscron
Born January 30, 1970, in Roeselare
Previous clubs
FC Roeselare, Cercle Bruges, FC Roeselare, Excelsior Mouscron, Eendracht Aalst
International debut
May 1999, v Peru
International caps
9 (0 goals)

On the other hand there aren't so many differences. It's either win or lose, no matter what level of football you happen to be in. And I'm the world's worst loser, even if it's just a training match.

How will Belgium get on in Euro 2000?
We can have a good tournament. Playing at home will be a big advantage, of course. Other countries will have to take full account of us. If we're playing a compact sort of game, and playing it well, we will be difficult to beat.

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comments I'll do it in the dressing-room, because I don't want to see my face on TV every day. First you have to show your class on the pitch. At hard times a leader should raise his game and show his team the right direction. I hope I will be able to do it."

Jeremies was born in Grlitz, in the former East Germany, near the Polish border. He joined local side Motor when he was six years old, and at 12 was spotted by Dynamo Dresden and went to the Sporthochschule, the institute where thousands of GDR's Olympic medallists were fashioned.

"I always enjoyed life in Dresden, and never had the feeling I was wasting my youth or that I was missing something. I simply enjoyed playing and that's the bottom line if you want to reach the Bundesliga.

"In Germany there are six million people playing football, and only 500 will make it at the highest level. Without determination and joy it's impossible to get there."

Despite playing at the former GDR's top club, Jeremies took a long time before breaking through. He was 21 when he was discovered by 1860 Munich, the second best but most popular team in the Bavarian city, in 1995. He signed for a bargain £17,000 and soon proved to be a key player as 1860 progressed to mid-table.

He played either as libero or in midfield, and his solid performances were soon rewarded with a call from Germany coach Vogts. In November 1997 Jeremies made his international debut against South Africa, and since then has been a regular. Despite suffering an injury halfway through the 1998 World Cup, Jeremies was one of Germany's few bright spots in a poor campaign.

Meanwhile, top clubs were interested in him and he was transferred across Munich to Bayern for £2million. Despite the huge competition at the club he was soon a regular in the starting line-up, and scored his first goal for Bayern in the derby against his old club.

He is still developing into a key player. Things are going well – he won the championship with Bayern last season and played in that bizarre Champions League Final against Manchester United.

His main target this season is Euro 2000. "I know that no country has won them twice in a row," he says. "But we've world-class players – Bierhoff, Kahn and Matthaus – and enough potential to become European champions again."

Fact file

Country Germany
Club Bayern Munich
Born March 5, 1974, in Grlitz
Previous club Motor Grlitz, Dynamo Dresden, 1860 Munich
International debut November 1997, v South Africa
International caps
22 (1 goal)
Honours German League 1999 (Bayern)

The men who matter

Radek Bejbl

Nick Bidwell hears an unsung Czech hero promising a summer surprise

RESIDENT Czech midfield workhorse Radek Bejbl claims that his country's bitter-sweet memories of Euro 96 will give them an edge at this summer's European finals.

"Most of the Czech team who played so well to become runners-up at Euro 96 are still around, and there's no doubt that our experience of four years ago in England will stand us in good stead in Belgium and Holland," says Bejbl, who joined Atletico Madrid from Slavia Prague immediately after playing his part in the Czechs' march to Wembley.

"Euro 96 opened our eyes to the value of Czech football. We came to realise that if we applied ourselves properly, we could compete with anyone in Europe. What's more, we learnt a lot of important lessons about how to approach a big tournament.

"Naturally, we were very proud to become the vice-champions of Europe. It was much more than any of us dared hope at the start of the competition.

"But it doesn't change the fact that a linesman was flagging for offside when Bierhoff scored the winner in extra time in the Final. It was a devastating moment, one I never want to go through again. We feel we have an injustice to put right, and we aim to do it at Euro 2000."

Despite winning 10 out of 10 of their games en route to the European finals and settling into second place in the FIFA ranking list, the Czechs are unlikely to figure among the favourites in Euro 2000.

Doubters point out that home and away victories over the likes of Scotland, Bosnia, Estonia, Lithuania and the Faroes did not constitute an exploit of gargantuan proportions, and that a Euro 2000 first round 'Group of Death' – in which they face Holland, France and Denmark – can only end in disappointment.

Not surprisingly, Bejbl sees the Czech prospects in a different light, and says: "Whatever the quality of our opposition in the qualifiers, a 100 per cent record is a rare and very pleasing achievement. We're not foolish enough to assume that good results in qualification automatically lead to success in the finals, but it's done our confidence a lot of good,

Orange blossom...De Boer believes Holland can flourish on home soil

Ronald De Boer

Jim Holden talks to a player who ignores

THERE was little evidence of Euro 2000 fever walking the streets of Amsterdam on the afternoon before Holland's recent impressive 2-1 defeat of Germany. One souvenir shop dedicated to the tournament, tucked away off Dam Square, was evidence that the traditionally laid-back Dutch population can put football into perspective.

But Ronald De Boer, one of Holland's Barcelona brigade, believes that will change when the competition kicks off, and he is convinced that passionate home support will play a vital part in inspiring the team to success.

"Playing in a home tournament with your own fans there to support you will be very special," says De Boer, who will turn 30 just before Euro 2000 begins.

"When you are abroad, for example in America and France in the last two World Cups, you don't get the feeling of excitement that you experience in your home country.

"This time that feeling will be rushing through our blood when we see the crowds and see all the banners on the streets, which tell you that everyone is thinking about the tournament all the time. Maybe that will give us an extra push."

The sparkling victory against the Germans, which might have been a 6-1 slaughter but for sloppy finishing, will have helped to restore the faith

Work ethic...Bejbl is happy to take on the midfield grafting role

and that is important. We're all very realistic about the challenge ahead. Our group is really tough. France are world champions, Holland are arguably an even better side and are playing at home, while Denmark are a good mixture of power and technical ability.

"On the other hand we are not without our strengths and the role of outsiders should suit us well."

Every aspiring team needs a Bejbl, an unsung hero who takes care of the more thankless midfield labours. And, though his industry, athleticism, drive and simple but effective passing ability often go unrecorded, the situation does not matter to him.

"I can play, I don't feel ill at ease with the ball and like to get forward when I can. But essentially my job is to give cover to the defence, to harry, run, and win the ball. Each of us has his job to do and that's mine. For flair we have Berger, Nedved, Poborsky and Smicer, and with guys like that in our team we can surprise people at Euro 2000."

Fact file

Country Czech Republic
Club Atletico Madrid (Spa)
Born August 29, 1972, in Numburk
Previous clubs Mlada Doleslav, Numburk, Slavia Prague
International debut January 1992, v Egypt
International caps 44 (3 goals)
Honours European Championship runner-up 1996; Czech League 1996 (Slavia)

the critics of Holland's recent record

of the Orange supporters. A previous 11-match run without a victory was instantly forgiven and forgotten.

Part of the problem for the Dutch has been playing a succession of friendlies. Host countries in other tournaments also have found it hard to impress without the extra edge that competitive matches deliver.

De Boer adds: "If you look at some of the results you might get the impression the Dutch side are not going well. But I think the opposite. Even though we didn't win a game for a long time, I have the feeling that we are a very strong side.

"In a lot of the games we dominated the play, and it was only a lack of concentration that made us draw. Results for other top countries have not been so good, either, and I think we will be very strong in Euro 2000. We haven't played competitive matches, and perhaps that has been part of the problem with results. But I don't believe that will be significant when Euro 2000 starts. If you look at the record of countries that have hosted major tournaments, many times they do well, reach the Final or win the Final.

"When the games are there that really count, you want to get started. We want to play the real thing again.

"Beating Germany was an important boost, especially for the coach, Frank Rijkaard. We must give everything for him. He deserves a good result, and I can tell you that he has the backing of the players."

De Boer has been linked with moves away from Barcelona, possibly to Arsenal, after struggling to hold a regular first-team position among the all-star squad. His attitude to that is characteristically phlegmatic.

"Careers switch round very quickly," he says. "One week you are out of the team and feeling low, the next you are back in the side and a hero because you play a good game and score a goal.

"I am happy at Barcelona and want to show my skills there. At the moment I'm not thinking about other teams, but in football it is always the case that you never say never."

Fact file

Country Holland
Club Barcelona (Spa)
Born May 15, 1970, in Grootebrock
Previous clubs Ajax, Twente, Ajax
International debut March 1993, v San Marino
International caps 57 caps (12 goals)
Honours Champions League 1995 (Ajax); World Club Cup 1995; European Super Cup 1995; Dutch League 1990, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1998 (Ajax); Dutch Cup 1998 (Ajax); Spanish League 1999

EURO 2000

NEWS

No go for Luis Enrique

SPAIN midfielder Luis Enrique has given up hope of playing at the finals after undergoing surgery on his left knee at the start of March. Doctors have said that his rehabilitation will take at least three months.

"My recuperation will take in the European Championship. I've resigned myself to that now," said the Barcelona player. "But I needed this operation. Now I just want to get back to playing."

● The kick-off time of the tournament's second semi-final has been brought forward to give players the minimum 72 hours rest between games required by UEFA. The game, in Amsterdam, originally had been scheduled to start at 8.45pm on June 29, but will now begin at 6pm. The Final kicks off at 8pm three days later.

● Egyptian Gamal El Ghandour will be the African referee at the finals. The Confederation of African Football nominated him as part of the reciprocal agreement with UEFA which saw Frenchman Alain Sars officiate at the African Nations Cup.

● Most players competing in this summer's finals will have to pay 18 per cent of their earnings in tax. All players' income from the Euro 96 tournament was tax-free.

CZECH REPUBLIC: Sparta Prague's uncapped goalkeeper Jaromir Blazek was named in the squad for the friendly against Australia on March 29.

DENMARK: Jacob Laursen has surprisingly quit the international scene, *writes Jim Holden*. The defender said he wanted to spend more time with his family but also cited the heckling he received from fans during the play-off victory against Israel as a reason for his decision.

His namesake, Under-21 full-back Martin Laursen, was called into the senior party for the friendly against Portugal.

ENGLAND: Aston Villa midfielder Paul Merson announced his retirement from international football after he was excluded from the England squad to face Argentina at the end of February.

End of the road...Luis Enrique will miss the finals

David Batty (midfield) and Graeme Le Saux (left-back) are both major doubts for the tournament because of long-term injury problems.

FRANCE: Florian Maurice's hopes of making the finals squad were dealt a blow when a recurrent knee injury put him out of action for his club, Marseille, for up to eight weeks.

GERMANY: National coach Erich Ribbeck has indicated that six places in his squad are still open, and he put forward the names of Bayern Munich forward Alexander Zickler and Bayer Leverkusen midfielder Michael Ballack as potential participants.

Zickler's club-mate Steffen Effenberg has ruled out a return to the national set-up. "I have already booked holidays for Euro 2000," said the midfielder, who announced his international retirement in September 1998. "When you make a decision you should stick to it."

NORWAY: Rosenborg's John Carew, the subject of much recent transfer speculation, was relegated to the Under-21 side when Nils Johan Semb announced his party for the friendly against Switzerland.

"The squad was picked following an assessment of performance," said the coach. "Carew played well against Turkey and has played at a good, level standard for Rosenborg, but this time others were chosen."

YUGOSLAVIA: Players who impressed during the 2-1 friendly victory over Macedonia, *writes Vladimir Novak*, included Predrag Mijatovic, who scored both goals, and Nenad Sakic, in for the suspended Zoran Mirkovic at right-back.

National coach Vujadin Boskov also was pleased with the performance of Predrag Djordjevic at left wing-back.

WARM-UP SCHEDULE

BELGIUM
NORWAY (Apr 26, Oslo);
DENMARK (June 3, Copenhagen)

CZECH REPUBLIC
GERMANY (June 3, Nurnberg)

DENMARK
SWEDEN (Apr 26, Copenhagen);
BELGIUM (June 3, Copenhagen)

ENGLAND
BRAZIL (May 27, Wembley);
UKRAINE (May 31, Wembley);
MALTA (June 3, Valletta)

FRANCE
SLOVENIA (Apr 26, Saint-Denis);
CROATIA (May 28, Zagreb);
JAPAN (June 4, Casablanca);
KING HASSAN II TNMT FINAL OR 3RD PLACE MATCH (June 6, Casablanca)

GERMANY
SWITZERLAND (Apr 26, Kaiserslautern);
REAL MALLORCA (May 30, Palma);
CZECH REPUBLIC (June 3, Nurnberg);
LIECHTENSTEIN (June 7, Freiburg)

HOLLAND
SCOTLAND (Apr 26, Arnhem);
ROMANIA (May 27, Amsterdam);
POLAND (June 4, venue tba)

ITALY
PORTUGAL (Apr 26, venue tba);
NORWAY (June 3, Oslo)

NORWAY
BELGIUM (Apr 26, Oslo);
SLOVAKIA (May 27, Oslo);
ITALY (June 3, Oslo)

PORTUGAL
ITALY (Apr 26, venue tba)

ROMANIA
HOLLAND (May 27, Amsterdam);
GREECE (June 3, Bucharest)

SLOVENIA
FRANCE (Apr 26, Saint-Denis);
LUXEMBOURG (June 3, Luxembourg)

SPAIN
SWEDEN (June 3, Gothenburg);
LUXEMBOURG (June 7, Luxembourg)

SWEDEN
DENMARK (Apr 26, Copenhagen);
SPAIN (June 3, Gothenburg)

TURKEY
YUGOSLAVIA (Apr 26, venue tba)

YUGOSLAVIA
TURKEY (Apr 26, venue tba);
CHINA (May 25, Beijing);
SOUTH KOREA (May 28, Seoul);
SOUTH KOREA (May 30, Seoul);
HONG KONG LEAGUE XI (June 3, Hong Kong)

tba = to be announced

MAY 2000

THE NO.1 INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL MAGAZINE

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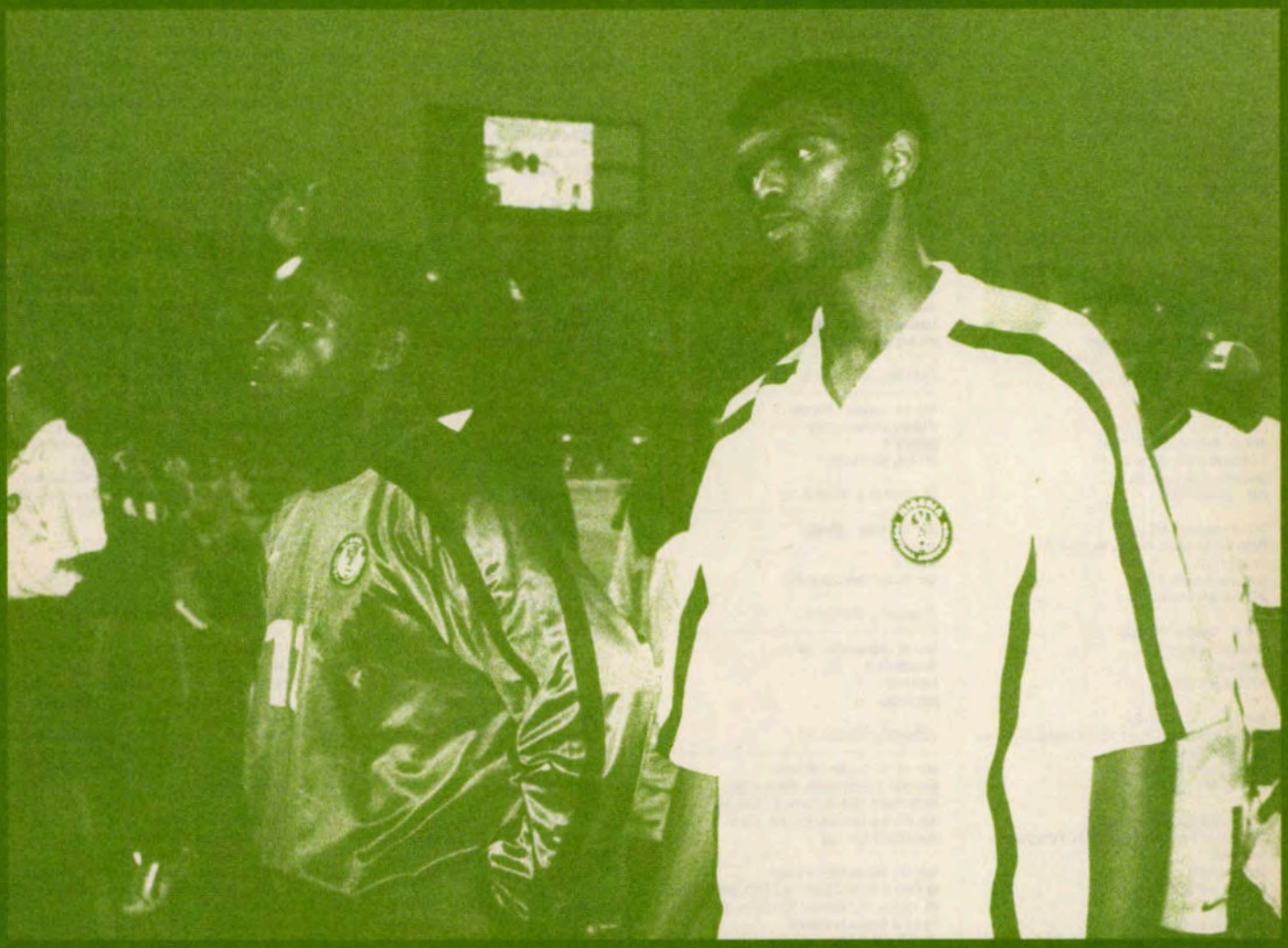

YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE MONTH'S STATS & FACTS

INTERNATIONALS

Friday, February 25

Feb 25 - Bangkok - King's Cup
Thailand 2 (Thonkanya 23, 35)
Estonia 1 (Reim pen 67)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Hamid (Mly)

Feb 25 - Bangkok - King's Cup
Finland 3 (Koltilla, Helm, Kallio)
Brazil U-17 0

Sunday, February 27

Feb 27 - Bangkok - King's Cup Final
Thailand 5 (Srikerd 20, 44, 82, Thonkanya 23, Boriban 56)
Finland 1 (Kallio 82)
HT: 3-0

Feb 27 - Bangkok - King's Cup third place match
Brazil U-17 1 (Vivian 36)
Estonia 0

Tuesday, February 29

Feb 29 - San Salvador - friendly
El Salvador 3 (Rivera 35, Arce 44, 80)
Panama 1 (Piggot 66)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 5,000

Saturday, March 4

Mar 4 - Port of Spain - WC qual
Trinidad & Tobago 5 (Andrews 19, Eve 43, 57, Dwarika 63, 87)
Dutch Antilles 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 18,000

Mar 4 - San Pedro Sula - WC qual
Honduras 3 (A Pineda 29, Guerrero 40, Nunez 70)
Nicaragua 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 15,000

Sunday, March 5

Mar 5 - San Salvador - WC qual
El Salvador 5 (Martinez 14, Rodriguez 31, Diaz Arce 69, Cerritos 79, Torres 89)
Belize 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 14,567

Mar 5 - Bridgetown - WC qual
Barbados 2 (Alexander 31, 47)
Grenada 2 (Modeste 75, 77)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 4,500

Mar 5 - Havana - WC qual
Cuba 4 (Marten 38, Alvarez 56, Prado 87, Gandara 90)
Cayman Islands 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 11,000

Mar 5 - Castries - WC qual
St Lucia 1 (Regis 46)
Surinam 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 3,500

Mar 5 - La Paz - friendly
Bolivia 9 (Suarez 2, 7, 42, 73, Baldiviaso 39, Botero 64, 70, 87, Carvallo 68)
Haiti 2 (Marcelin 60, Gilles 72)
HT: 4-0. **Att:** 20,000.

Mar 5 - San Cristobal - WC qual
Dominican Republic 3 (Zapata 31, Pirez 38, Reyes 44)
Montserrat 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 5,000

Mar 5 - The Valley - WC qual
Bahamas 3 (Haven 12, Moussis 29, Davies 32)
Anguilla 1 (Hughes 69)
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 3,000

Mar 5 - Kingstown - WC qual
St Vincent & The Grenadines 9 (Jack 6, 15, 51, Guy 19, 22, 32, Cheuitt 76, 88, Gonsalves 83)
US Virgin Islands 0
HT: 5-0. **Att:** 1,500

Mar 5 - Tortola - WC qual
British Virgin Islands 1 (Williams 61)
Bermuda 5 (Lightbourne 20, Cam 22, Goater 35, 48, pen 65)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 2,000

Monday, March 6

Mar 6 - Addis Abeba - friendly
Ethiopia 1 (Getachew 68)
Sudan 0
Att: 3,000

Wednesday, March 8

Mar 8 - Quito - friendly
Ecuador 1 (E Hurtado 24)
Honduras 3 (Carcamo 55, 63, Velazquez 90)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 1,000. **Ref:** Diaz (Ecu)
Ecuador: Cevallos, Ayovi (De la Cruz 71), I Hurtado, Montano, Cagua, Quinonez (Ferri 65), Tenorio, Chala, Cubero (Mendez 65), Kaviedes, E Hurtado.
Honduras: Cruz (H Caballero 46), Clavesquin, Guerrero, Medina, L Pineda, De Leon (A Pineda 89), Turcios, Carcamo (Pavon 66), Morales (Garcia 46), Martinez (Velazquez 83), S Caballero.

Saturday, March 11

Mar 11 - Port-au-Prince - WC qual
Haiti 4 (Pierre 6, 22, 47, Menelas 42)
Dominica 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 8,000

Mar 11 - Oranjestad - WC qual
Aruba 4 (Filomina 2, Cross, Mackay)
Puerto Rico 2 (Ortiz, Astondoa)

Sunday, March 12

Mar 12 - Lusaka - friendly
Zambia 1 (Nsofwa 85)
Malawi 1 (Somanje 30)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 12,000

Mar 12 - Birmingham - friendly
United States 1 (Olsen 90)
Tunisia 1 (Kanzari 78)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 18,000

Tuesday, March 14

Mar 14 - Lusaka - friendly
Malawi 1 (Chaswe 88)
Zambia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 14,000

Wednesday, March 15

Mar 15 - Kobe - friendly
Japan 0
China 0
Att: 39,482. **Ref:** Son (SKo)

Thursday, March 16

Mar 16 - Maracaibo - friendly
Venezuela 0
Bolivia 0
Att: 6,000

Saturday, March 18

Mar 18 - St George - WC qual
Grenada 2 (Babb og 55, Fletcher 59)
Barbados 3 (Cox 20, Forde 35, Riley 96)
Aet. **HT:** 0-2. **90mins:** 2-2. **Att:** 3,000
Barbados 5-4 on agg

Mar 18 - Basseterre - WC qual
St Kitts & Nevis 8 (Saddler 22, 53, pen 63, Isaac 29, Francis 47, Crawford 50, Gumbs 75, Smith 86)
Turks & Caicos Islands 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 4,000

Mar 18 - Willemstad - WC qual
Dutch Antilles 1 (Martina 41)
Trinidad & Tobago 1 (Andrews 90)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 4,000
Trinidad & Tobago 6-1 on agg

Sunday, March 19

Mar 19 - San Juan - WC qual
Puerto Rico 2 (Ortiz 7, Greeman 19)
Aruba 2 (McKay 37, Krass 43)
HT: 2-2. **Att:** 10,000
Aruba 6-4 on agg

Mar 19 - Georgetown - WC qual
Cayman Islands 0
Cuba 0
Att: 5,000
Cuba 4-0 on agg

Mar 19 - Paramaribo - WC qual
Surinam 1 (Doesburj 80)
St Lucia 0
Aet. **HT:** 0-0. **90mins:** 1-0. **Att:** 6,000
Agg 1-1. Surinam 3-1 on pens

Mar 19 - Hamilton - WC qual
Bermuda 9 (Boyles 6, Russell 34, Wade 53, Burgess pen 57, Lewis 60, Astwood 61, 79, Nusum 75, 89)
British Virgin Islands 0
HT: 2-0
Bermuda 14-1 on agg

Mar 19 - St Croix - WC qual
US Virgin Islands 1 (Santos 72)
St Vincent & The Grenadines 5 (Gonsalves 7, Chewitt 15, 35, 51, 89)
HT: 0-3
St Vincent 14-1 on agg

Mar 19 - Roseau - WC qual
Dominica 1 (Peters 6)
Haiti 3 (Pierre 56, 87, Desir 69)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 3,000
Haiti 7-1 on agg

Mar 19 - Nassau - WC qual
Bahamas 2 (Haven 14, Davies 78)
Anguilla 1 (O'Conner pen 40)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 8,000
Bahamas 5-2 on agg

Mar 19 - St John's - WC qual
Montserrat 1 (Dyer 88)
Dominican Republic 3 (Sanchez 43, Gregorio 69, Zapata 86)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 2,000

Mar 19 - San Pedro Sula, Honduras - WC qual
Belize 1 (Nunez 40)
Guatemala 2 (Garcia 33, Ramirez 76)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 2,500

Mar 19 - Diriamba - WC qual
Nicaragua 0
Panama 2 (Mendez 5, Dely Valdes 61)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 12,000

Mar 19 - Gaborone - friendly
Botswana 3 (Selolwane 32, 70, Maimela 86)
Swaziland 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 4,000

Tuesday, March 21

Mar 21 - Basseterre - WC qual
Turks & Caicos Islands 0
St Kitts & Nevis 6 (Huggins 18, 60, 71, Gumbs pen 30, Isaac 60, Francis 68)
HT: 0-2
St Kitts & Nevis 14-0 on agg

Mar 21 - Windhoek - friendly
Namibia 2 (Benjamin 27, Van Wyk 75)
Zimbabwe 1 (Sibanda 10)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 5,000

Wednesday, March 22

Mar 22 - Santiago - friendly
Chile 5 (Tello 10, Sierra 34, Tapia 42, Pizarro 80, Nunez 90)
Honduras 2 (Martinez 19, Chironos 43)
HT: 3-2. **Att:** 5,000

Mar 22 - Nicosia - friendly
Cyprus 0
Iran 0
Att: 500

EUROPE

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

2ND GROUP PHASE

3rd matchday - February 29

GROUP C

Kyiv Dynamo 2 (Khatskevich 9, Rebrov 29)
Rosenborg 1 (Jakobsen 48)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 38,000. **Ref:** Michel (Slk)
Dynamo: Shovkovskyi - Gerasimenko, Holovko, Mamedov (Fedorov 86), Nesmachny, Khatskevich, Kaladze, Bialkevich, Husin, Rebrov, Demetradze (Shatskikh 87).
Rosenborg: Arason - Basma, Bragstad, Hoftun, Bergdolmo, Strand (Storflor 46; Johnsen 90), Skammelsrud, Berg, Winsnes, Carew, Jakobsen.

Real Madrid 2 (Morientes 25, Raul 48)
Bayern Munich 4 (Scholl 21, Effenberg 24, Fink 39, Paulo Sergio 66)
HT: 1-3. **Att:** 72,000. **Ref:** Milton Nielsen (Den)
Madrid: Casillas - Michel Salgado, Roberto Carlos, Hierro, Redondo, Raul, Morientes (Ognjenovic 79), Guti (McManaman 62), Karanka, Anelka, Geremi.
Bayern: Kahn - Babbel (Linke 62), Lizarazu, Kuffour, Scholl (Tarnat 86), Elber (Santa Cruz 86), Matthaus, Effenberg, Paulo Sergio, Fink, Salihamidzic.

GROUP D

Lazio 1 (Veron 37)
Feyenoord 2 (Tomasson 78, 84)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 33,000. **Ref:** Lopez Nieto (Spa)
Lazio: Marchegiani - Gottardi, Mihajlovic (Negro 40), Fernando Couto, Lombardo, Veron (Nedved 69), Sensini, Simeone, Mancini, Boksic, Inzaghi (Stankovic 60).
Feyenoord: Dudek - Van Gobbel, Konterman, De Haan, Rzasa, Bosvelt, Van Gastel (Gyan 82), Paauwe, De Visser (Samardzic 75), Kalou (Tomasson 46), Cruz.

Marseille 1 (Pires 16)
Chelsea 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 40,000. **Ref:** Pedersen (Swe)
Marseille: Trevisan - Blondeau, Cyprien, Luccin, Abardonado, Brando, Pires, Leroy, Dalmat, Pouget (De la Pena 72), Bakayoko (Moses 90).
Chelsea: De Goey - Ferrer (Morris 81), Leboeuf, Desailly, Harley, Petrescu, Wise, Deschamps (Di Matteo 62), Poyet, Zola, Flo (Sutton 81).

March 1

GROUP A

Barcelona 4 (Rivaldo 16, 89, F De Boer 23, Kluivert 45)
FC Porto 2 (Jardel 5, 79)
HT: 3-1. **Att:** 68,000. **Ref:** Durkin (Eng)
Barcelona: Hesp - Puyol (Reiziger 46), Abelardo, F De Boer, Zenden (Dehu 52), Guardiola, Luis Enrique, Cocu, Figo, Kluivert, Rivaldo.
Porto: Hilario - Secretario, Jorge Costa, Aloisio, Esquerdinha, Peixe (Alessandro 74), Rui Barros (Domingos 39), Chainho, Capucho (Clayton 74), Drulovic, Jardel.

Hertha Berlin 1 (Veit 45)
Sparta Prague 1 (Siegl 84)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Colombo (Fra)
Hertha: Fiedler - Herzog, Van Burik, Sverisson, Deisler, Schmidt, Veit, Hartmann, Wosz (Roy 88), Preetz, Daei.
Sparta: Blazek - Gabriel, Novotny, Bolf, Fukal, Sionko, Rosicky, Jarosik, Baranek, Lokvenc (Siegl 68), Obajdin (Hapal 75).

GROUP B

Fiorentina 1 (Mijatovic pen 20)
Valencia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Merk (Ger)
Fiorentina: Toldo - Repka, Adani, Pierini (Tarozzi 80), Torricelli, Cois (Amoroso 83), Di Livio (Rossitto 72), Heinrich, Rui Costa, Batistuta, Mijatovic.
Valencia: Canizares - Angloma, Djukic, Pellegrino, Carboni, Farinos, Milla (Angulo 26), Gerard, Kily Gonzalez, Ilie (Sanchez 80), Claudio Lopez.

Manchester United 2 (Giggs 42, Sheringham 84)
Bordeaux 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 59,786. **Ref:** Strampe (Ger)
Man Utd: Van der Gouw - G Neville, Stam, Silvestre, Irwin, Butt, Beckham, Keane (Fortune 88), Giggs (Solskjaer 88), Sheringham, Cole (P Neville 81).
Bordeaux: Rame - Grenet, Martins (Ziani 65), Afanou, Alicarte, Bonnissel, Pavon, Diabate, Micoud, Laslandes, Wiltord.

4th matchday - March 7

GROUP A

FC Porto 0
Barcelona 2 (Abelardo 37, Rivaldo 59)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 45,000. **Ref:** Braschi (Ita)
Porto: Hilario - Secretario, Aloisio, Esquerdinha, Peixe (Chainho 46), Paulinho Santos (Clayton 64), Rubens Junior (Domingos 45), Ricardo Silva, Capucho, Drulovic, Jardel.
Barcelona: Hesp - Puyol, Abelardo, F De Boer, Bogarde, Guardiola, Rivaldo (Dani 75), Cocu (Gabri 46), R De Boer, Kluivert, Figo (Xavi 90).

Sparta Prague 1 (Fukal 90)
Hertha Berlin 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 9,101. **Ref:** Frisk (Swe)
Sparta: Blazek - Gabriel, Novotny, Bolf, Fukal, Jarosik, Baranek, Rosicky, Hapal (Siegl 65), Lokvenc, Sionko (Svoboda 74).
Hertha: Fiedler - Herzog, Konstantinidis, Rekdal (Sanneh 90), Schmidt, Michalke (Veit 21), Rehmer, Hartmann, Roy (Preetz 79), Daei, Alves.

GROUP B

Bordeaux 1 (Pavon 9)
Manchester United 2 (Keane 33, Solskjaer 84)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 28,000. **Ref:** Wegereef (Hol)
Bordeaux: Rame - Grenet, Saveljic, Afanou, Bonnissel, Ziani (Rouviere 60), Batiles (Diabate 9), Pavon, Micoud, Laslandes, Wiltord (Feindouno 82). *Sent off: Laslandes 23min.*
Man Utd: Van der Gouw - G Neville, Stam, Silvestre, Irwin (Solskjaer 83), Beckham, Keane, Butt, Giggs, Sheringham (Yorke 77), Cole (Berg 86).

Valencia 2 (Ilie 35, Mendieta pen 90)
Fiorentina 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 50,000. **Ref:** Krug (Ger)
Valencia: Canizares - Angloma, Djukic, Pellegrino, Carboni, Farinos, Mendieta, Gerard, Kily Gonzalez (Angulo 95), Claudio Lopez, Ilie (Oscar Garcia 77).
Fiorentina: Taglialatela - Repka, Adani, Pierini, Torricelli (Torozzi 77), Di Livio, Cois, Heinrich (Amoroso 53), Rui Costa, Mijatovic (Balbo 57), Batistuta.

March 8

GROUP C

Bayern Munich 4 (Scholl 4, Elber 30, Zickler 79, 90)
Real Madrid 1 (Ivan Helguera 69)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 60,000. **Ref:** Jol (Hol)
Bayern: Kahn - Kuffour, Linke, Matthaus (P Andersson 90), Lizarazu, Salihamidzic, Fink, Effenberg, Paulo Sergio, Elber (Zickler 74), Scholl (Wiesinger 88).
Madrid: Casillas - Roberto Carlos, Karanka (Anelka 69), Hierro, Michel Salgado, Redondo, Guti, Raul, Geremi (McManaman 63), Ivan Helguera, Morientes (Ivan Campo 84).

Rosenborg 1 (Berg 38)
Kyiv Dynamo 2 (Rebrov 32, 67)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 13,067. **Ref:** Hamer (Lux)
Rosenborg: Arason - Basma, Bragstad, Hoftun, Johnsen, Strand (Storvik 78), Skammelsrud, Berg, Sorensen, Carew, Jakobsen (Knutsen 78).
Dynamo: Shovkovskyi - Gerasimenko, Shatskikh (Demetradze 46), Mamedov, Nesmachny (Kormiltsev 67), Khatskevich, Kaladze, Bialkevich, Husin, Rebrov, Fedorov.

GROUP D

Chelsea 1 (Wise 27)
Marseille 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 33,206. **Ref:** Fernandez Marin (Spa)
Chelsea: De Goey - Babayaro, Leboeuf, Desailly, Ferrer, Deschamps (Di Matteo 79), Poyet, Wise, Morris, Zola (Harley 79), Flo.
Marseille: Trevisan - Perez (Fischer 38), Pires, Brando, Dalmat, Leroy, Cyprien (De la Pena 66), Luccin, Abardonado, Pouget, Bakayoko.

Feyenoord 0
Lazio 0
Att: 45,000. **Ref:** Benko (Aut)
Feyenoord: Dudek - Van Gobbel, Van Wonderen, Konterman, Rzasa, Bosvelt, Van Gastel, Paauwe (Kalou 66), De Visser, Tomasson, Cruz.
Lazio: Marchegiani - Negro, Mihajlovic, Nesta, Pancaro, Sensini, Veron, Nedved, Sergio Conceicao, Salas, Mancini (Inzaghi 66).

5th matchday - March 14

GROUP C

Bayern Munich 2 (Scholl 11, Paulo Sergio pen 39)
Rosenborg 1 (Carew 64)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 21,000. **Ref:** Trentalange (Ita)
Bayern: Kahn - Babbel, Andersson, Kuffour, Tarnat, Jeremies, Fink, Scholl (Salihamidzic 75), Paulo Sergio (Santa Cruz 84), Jancker (Elber 75), Zickler.
Rosenborg: Arason - Basma, Bragstad, Bergdolmo, Johnsen, Strand (Winsnes 82), Skammelsrud, Berg, Sorensen, Carew, Knutsen (Jakobsen 73). *Sent off: Bragstad 90min.*

Real Madrid 2 (Raul pen 14, Roberto Carlos 72)
Kyiv Dynamo 2 (Khatskevich 42, Hierro og 56)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 65,000. **Ref:** Sars (Fra)
Madrid: Casillas - Roberto Carlos, Karanka, Hierro, Michel Salgado, Redondo, McManaman (Meca Garcia 61), Guti, Geremi (Ivan Helguera 72), Raul, Morientes.
Dynamo: Shovkovskyi - Gerasimenko, Holovko, Mamedov, Nesmachny, Khatskevich, Bialkevich, Husin, Shatskikh (Kardash 46), Rebrov (Kostyuk 78), Demetradze.

GROUP D

Feyenoord 1 (Kalou 59)
Chelsea 3 (Zola 39, Wise 64, Flo 69)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 46,000. **Ref:** Fisker (Den)
Feyenoord: Dudek - Van Gobbel, Konterman, Van Wonderen, Rzasa, Bosvelt, Van Gastel, Paauwe (Kalou 46), De Visser (Samardzic 69), Cruz, Tomasson.
Chelsea: De Goey - Petrescu, Leboeuf, Desailly, Babayaro, Di Matteo, Deschamps, Wise, Poyet (Morris 77), Flo, Zola (Ambrosetti 90).

Lazio 5 (Inzaghi 17, 37, 38, 71, Boksic 82)
Marseille 1 (Leroy 50)
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Frisk (Swe)
Lazio: Marchegiani - Negro, Mihajlovic (Fernando Couto 50), Nesta, Pancaro (Gottardi 74), Sergio Conceicao, Simeone, Stankovic (Sensini 68), Nedved, Inzaghi, Boksic.
Marseille: Porato - Martin (Bakayoko 46), Fischer (Martini 46), Abardonado, Brando, Luccin, Dalmat, Leroy, De la Pena, Pires, Pouget (Moses 61).

March 15

GROUP A

Barcelona 3 (Xavi 11, Gabri 49, Kluivert 83)
Hertha Berlin 1 (Alves 7)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 48,000. **Ref:** Piraux (Blg)
Barcelona: Hesp - Bogarde, F De Boer, Abelardo (Dehu 53), Puyol, Gabri, Xavi, R De Boer (Litmanen 71), Rivaldo, Kluivert, Figo (Simao 46).
Hertha: Kiraly - Rehmer (Neuendorf 59), Herzog, Van Burik (Wosz 56), Sverrisson, Schmidt (Sanneh 78), Hartmann, Covic, Preetz, Alves.

FC Porto 2 (Jorge Costa 16, Capucho 64)
Sparta Prague 2 (Lokvenc 74, Fukal 91)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 27,400. **Ref:** Benko (Aut)
Porto: Vitor Baia - Secretario, Esquerdinha, Jorge Costa, Capucho (Rui Barros 82), Ricardo Silva, Deco, Chainho (Peixe 53), Drulovic, Jardel, Domingos (Paulinho Santos 89).
Sparta: Blazek - Gabriel, Novotny, Bolf (Hornak 81), Fukal, Svoboda (Siegl 85), Jarosik, Baranek, Rosicky, Lokvenc, Sionko (Obajdin 14).

GROUP B

Bordeaux 1 (Wiltord 54)
Valencia 4 (Djukic 41, Mendieta pen 48, Kily Gonzalez 72, Juan Sanchez 90)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 27,000. **Ref:** Stuchlik (Aut)
Bordeaux: Rame - Grenet, Saveljic, Alicarte, Bonnissel, Ziani, Diabate (Afanou 50), Pavon, Micoud (Rouviere 77), Feindouno (Colucci 62), Wiltord. *Sent off: Saveljic 47min.*
Valencia: Canizares - Angloma, Djukic, Pellegrino, Carboni, Mendieta (Bjorklund 56), Farinos, Claudio Lopez, Kily Gonzalez (Oscar 86), Ilie (Angulo 73), Juan Sanchez.

ESM ELEVEN

EUROPEAN SPORTS MAGAZINES — FEBRUARY 2000

HOW THEY LINE UP

Kahn (4 votes, Bayern); Cafu (2, Roma), Matthaus (4, Bayern), Montero (2, Juve), Maldini (2, Milan); Davids (4, Juve), Zidane (4, Juve), Boban (2, Milan), Rivaldo (6, Barça); Shevchenko (4, Milan), Van Nistelrooy (4, PSV).

HOW THEY VOTED

A BOLA (PORTUGAL)

Kahn (Bayern); Negro (Lazio), Nesta (Lazio), Matthaus (Bayern), Leonard (Monaco); Davids (Juve), F Conceicao (La Coruna), Figo (Barça), Rivaldo (Barça); Van Nistelrooy (PSV), Cole (Man Utd).

DON BALON (SPAIN)

Butt (Hamburg); Djetou (Monaco), Matthaus (Bayern), Candela (Roma); Zambrotta (Juve), Emerson (Leverkusen), Boban (Milan), Rivaldo (Barça); Hasselbaink (Atletico Madrid), Inzaghi (Juve), Van Nistelrooy (PSV).

FOOT (BELGIUM)

Kahn (Bayern); Nesta (Lazio), Stam (Man Utd), Hierro (Real Madrid), Christanval (Monaco); Kewell (Leeds), Jeremies (Bayern), Zidane (Juve), Rivaldo (Barça); Shevchenko (Milan), Simone (Monaco).

FRANCE FOOTBALL

Butt (Hamburg); Babbel (Bayern), Hyypia (Liverpool), Blanc (Inter), Harte (Leeds); Gattuso (Milan), Gerrard (Liverpool), Zidane (Juve), Giggs (Man Utd); Mpenza (Schalke), Montella (Roma).

GAZZETTA DELLO SPORT (ITA)

Van der Sar (Juve); Cafu (Roma), Montero (Juve), Matthaus (Bayern), Zenden (Barça); Lauren (Mallorca), Davids (Juve), Mboma (Cagliari), Guti (Real Madrid); Shevchenko (Milan), Hasselbaink (Atletico Madrid).

KICKER (GERMANY)

Kahn (Bayern); Cafu (Roma), Montero (Juve), Hyypia (Liverpool), Candela (Roma); Scholes (Man Utd), Davids (Juve), Boban (Milan), Berger (Liverpool); Shevchenko (Milan), Rivaldo (Barça).

VOETBAL INTERNATIONAL (HOLLAND)

Dudek (Feyenoord); Ehiogu (Aston Villa), Ferrara (Juve), Blanc (Inter), Maldini (Milan); Gattuso (Milan), Zidane (Juve), Zahovic (Olympiakos), Rivaldo (Barça); Shevchenko (Milan), Van Nistelrooy (PSV).

WORLD SOCCER

Kahn (Bayern); Maldini (Milan), Cocu (Barça), Matthaus (Bayern), Luis Enrique (Barça); Rivaldo (Barça), Davids (Juve), Zidane (Juve), Djalminha (La Coruna); Van Nistelrooy (PSV), Inzaghi (Juve).

Manchester United 3 (Cole 20, Keane 33, Yorke 70)
Fiorentina 1 (Batistuta 16)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 59,926. **Ref:** Wojcik (Pol)
Man Utd: Bosnich - G Neville, Stam, Berg, Irwin, Beckham, Keane, Scholes, Giggs, Cole, Yorke.
Fiorentina: Toldo - Repka, Pierini, Adani, Heinrich, Torricelli (Tarozzi 76), Di Livio (Amoroso 76), Rui Costa, Rossitto, Batistuta, Mijatovic (Chiesa 63).
Sent off: Rossitto 62min.

6th matchday - March 21

GROUP A

Hertha Berlin 0
FC Porto 1 (Clayton 70)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 30,506. **Ref:** Collina (Ita)
Hertha: Kiraly - Herzog, Van Burik (Konstantinidis 46), Sverrisson, Sanneh, Covic, Deisler (Dardai 46), Michalke, Roy, Daei, Alves (Aracic 56).
Porto: Vitor Baia - Secretario, Esquerdinha, Deco (Peixe 93), Jorge Costa, Aloisio, Chainho, Drulovic (Clayton 67), Capucho (Alessandro 76), Jardel, Paulinho Santos.

Sparta Prague 1 (Svoboda 18)
Barcelona 2 (Gabri 52, 89)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 20,224. **Ref:** Pedersen (Nor)
Sparta: Blazek - Gabriel, Novotny, Bolf, Fukal, Svoboda (Hapal 59), Jarosik, Rosicky, Lokvenc, Sionko, Obajdin (Flachbart 71).
Barcelona: Hesp - Reiziger, F De Boer, Dehu, Bogarde, Guardiola (Xavi 60), Gabri, Cocu (Litmanen 75), Simao, Rivaldo (R De Boer 46), Dani.

GROUP B

Fiorentina 3 (Chiesa pen 47, Batistuta 61, Rui Costa 64)
Bordeaux 3 (Wiltord 5, Zanotti 87, Batiles 90)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Schoch (Swi)
Fiorentina: Toldo - Repka, Pierini, Firicano, Torricelli, Bressan (Amoroso 38), Di Livio, Cois (Okon 73), Rui Costa, Chiesa, Batistuta (Balbo 80).
Bordeaux: Rame - Diabate, Bonnissel, Batiles, Alicarte, Micoud (Zanotti 80), Ziani (Sahnoun 59), Pavon, Rouviere (Colucci 73), Laslandes, Wiltord.
Sent off: Alicarte 46min.

Valencia 0
Manchester United 0
Att: 50,000. **Ref:** Michel (Slk)
Valencia: Canizares - Angloma, Djukic, Pellegrino, Carboni, Angulo, Gerard, Farinos, Kily Gonzalez, Juan Sanchez (Ilie 70), Claudio Lopez.
Man Utd: Bosnich - G Neville, Stam, Berg, Irwin, Scholes, Keane, Butt, Fortune, Sheringham, Solskjaer (Cruyff 67).

March 22

GROUP C

Kyiv Dynamo 2 (Kaladze 34, Demetradze 72)
Bayern Munich 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 65,000. **Ref:** Veissiere (Fra)
Dynamo: Shovkovskyi - Gerasimenko, Holovko, Mamedov, Nesmachny (Yashkin 36), Khatskevich (Kardash 85), Kaladze, Bialkevich, Husin, Rebrov (Shatskikh 65), Demetradze.
Bayern: Wessels - Linke (Johansson 77), Andersson, Kuffour, Tarnat, Wiesinger, Fink, Salihamidzic, Wojciechowski, Zickler (Di Salvo 35), Santa Cruz (Jarolim 77).

Rosenborg 0
Real Madrid 1 (Raul 3)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 13,000. **Ref:** Levnikov (Rus)
Rosenborg: Arason - Basma, Johnsen, Hoftun, Bergdolmo, Strand, Skammelsrud, Berg, Sorensen, Carew, Jakobsen (Knutsen 70).
Madrid: Casillas - Michel Salgado, Roberto Carlos, Hierro (Karanka 46), Redondo, Raul, McManaman (Karembeu 85), Ivan Campo, Guti, Ivan Helguera, Aganzo (Balic 57). *Sent off: Guti 54min.*

GROUP D

Chelsea 1 (Poyet 45)
Lazio 2 (Inzaghi 54, Mihajlovic 66)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 34,260. **Ref:** Melo Pereira (Por)
Chelsea: De Goey - Petrescu, Babayaro (Harley 74), Leboeuf (Hogh 62), Desailly, Deschamps, Ferrer, Di Matteo (Morris 74), Poyet, Flo, Zola.
Lazio: Marchegiani - Negro, Mihajlovic, Simeone, Fernando Couto, Pancaro, Almeyda, Veron, Stankovic (Boksic 46), Nedved, Inzaghi (Salas 68; Gottardi 87). *Sent off: Couto 83min.*

Marseille 0
Feyenoord 0
Att: 10,000. **Ref:** Dauden Ibanez (Spa)
Marseille: Porato - Fischer, Martini, Luccin, Abardonado, Reina, Leroy, Brando, Keita (Gavanon 90), De la Pena, Bakayoko (Moses 62). *Sent off: Martini 75min.*
Feyenoord: Dudek - Van Gobbel (Korneev 80), Konterman, Van Wonderen, Rzasa, Bosvelt, Van Gastel (Somalia 75), De Visser (Van Vossen 65), Kalou, Cruz, Tomasson.

GROUP A - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona	6	5	1	0	17	5	16
FC Porto	6	3	1	2	8	8	10
Sparta Prague	6	1	2	3	5	12	5
Hertha Berlin	6	0	2	4	3	8	2

GROUP B - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Manchester Utd	6	4	1	1	10	4	13
Valencia	6	3	1	2	9	5	10
Fiorentina	6	2	2	2	7	8	8
Bordeaux	6	0	2	4	5	14	2

GROUP C - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern Munich	6	4	1	1	13	8	13
Real Madrid	6	3	1	2	11	12	10
Kyiv Dynamo	6	3	1	2	10	8	10
Rosenborg	6	0	1	5	5	11	1

GROUP D - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lazio	6	3	2	1	10	4	11
Chelsea	6	3	1	2	8	5	10
Feyenoord	6	2	2	2	7	7	8
Marseille	6	1	1	4	2	11	4

UEFA CUP

4th rnd, 1st legs (Mar 2 unless stated)

Arsenal 5 (Dixon 5, Henry 29, 67, Kanu 78, Bergkamp 82)
Deportivo La Coruna 1 (Djalminha pen 54)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 37,837. **Ref:** Ouzounov (Bul)
Sent off: Djalminha (Deportivo) 65min.

Atletico Madrid 2 (Hasselbaink 24, 77)
Lens 2 (Dacourt 15, 76)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 45,000

Borussia Dortmund 0
Galatasaray 2 (Hakan Sukur 33, Hagi 45)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 55,000. **Ref:** Melo Pereira (Por)

Juventus 1 (Kovacevic 49)
Celta Vigo 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 15,000

Mallorca 4 (J Stankovic 42, pen 52, pen 60, Diego Tristan 90)
Monaco 1 (Simone 1)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 24,000. **Ref:** Collina (Ita)

Parma 1 (Crespo 5)
Werder Bremen 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 18,000 (Feb 29)

Roma 0
Leeds United 0
Att: 37,726. **Ref:** Veissiere (Fra)

Slavia Prague 1 (Zanchi og 76)
Udinese 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 13,000 (Feb 29)

4th rnd, 2nd legs (Mar 9 unless stated)

Celta Vigo 4 (Makelele 1, Birindelli og 33, McCarthy 46, 70)
Juventus 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Dallas (Sco)
Sent off: Conte (Juventus) 27min, Montero (Juventus) 45min.
Celta 4-1 on agg

Deportivo La Coruna 2 (Victor Sanchez 68, Ivan Perez 90)
Arsenal 1 (Henry 63)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Oguz (Tur)
Arsenal 6-3 on agg

Galatasaray 0
Borussiá Dortmund 0
Att: 25,000. **Ref:** Graziano (Ita)
Galatasaray 2-0 on agg

Leeds United 1 (Kewell 67)
Roma 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 39,149. **Ref:** Garcia Aranda (Spa)
Sent off: Zago (Roma) 90min, Candela (Roma) 90min.
Leeds 1-0 on agg

Lens 4 (Nouma 28, 53, Sakho 38, Brunel 71)
Atletico Madrid 2 (Hasselbaink 45, Kiko 64)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 40,000. **Ref:** Levnikov (Rus)
Lens 6-4 on agg

Monaco 1 (Simone 33)
Mallorca 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Poll (Eng)
Sent off: Gallardo (Monaco) 53min
Mallorca 4-2 on agg

Udinese 2 (Fiore 22, Sosa 51)
Slavia Prague 1 (Koller 41)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 30,000 (Mar 7)
Agg 2-2. Slavia on away goals

Werder Bremen 3 (Dabrowski 29, Bode 45, Cannavaro og 66)
Parma 1 (Stanic 32)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 30,500. **Ref:** Wojcik (Pol)
Werder Bremen 3-2 on agg

Quarter-finals, 1st legs (Mar 16)

Arsenal 2 (Henry 21, Ljungberg 76)
Werder Bremen 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 38,009. **Ref:** Colombo (Fra)

Celta Vigo 0
Lens 0
Att: 27,000. **Ref:** Nilsson (Swe)

Leeds United 3 (Wilcox 39, Kewell 54, Bowyer 59)
Slavia Prague 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 39,519. **Ref:** Merk (Ger)
Sent off: Rada (Slavia) 85min

Mallorca 1 (Lauren 78)
Galatasaray 4 (Arif 44, Emre 48, Hakan Sukur 58, Okan 65)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Jol (Hol)

Quarter-finals, 2nd legs (Mar 23)

Galatasaray 2 (Capone 34, Hakan Sukur 47)
Mallorca 1 (Carlos 63)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Braschi (Ita)
Galatasaray 6-2 on agg

Lens 2 (Ismael pen 63, Nouma 73)
Celta Vigo 1 (Revivo 57)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 41,649. **Ref:** Durkin (Eng)
Lens 2-1 on agg

Slavia Prague 2 (Ulich 52, pen 79)
Leeds United 1 (Kewell 47)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 13,460. **Ref:** Oguz (Tur)
Leeds 4-2 on agg

Werder Bremen 2 (Bode 41, Bogdanovic 60)
Arsenal 4 (Parlour 8, 25, 70, Henry 59)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 31,400. **Ref:** Milton Nielsen (Den)
Sent off: Henry (Arsenal) 64min.
Arsenal 6-2 on agg

AUSTRIA

Mar 3: Rapid Wien 1 Austria Wien 0.
Mar 4: Grazer AK 2 Salzburg 0; Linz ASK 0 Bregenz 1; Lustenau 1 SV Ried 1.
Mar 5: FC Tirol 1 Sturm Graz 1.
Mar 7: Bregenz 1 Austria Wien 1.
Mar 10: Sturm Graz 6 Grazer AK 1.
Mar 11: Austria Wien 1 Lustenau 0; SV Ried 1 FC Tirol 2; Salzburg 1 Linz ASK 2.
Mar 12: Bregenz 0 Rapid Wien 3.
Mar 14: Lustenau 1 FC Tirol 1.
Mar 17: Rapid Wien 5 Salzburg 0.
Mar 18: Grazer AK 2 Linz ASK 1.
Mar 19: Lustenau 0 Sturm Graz 1; SV Ried 1 Austria Wien 2.
Mar 21: FC Tirol 2 Bregenz 0.

AUSTRIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Tirol	25	15	5	5	38	21	50
Rapid Wien	25	15	4	6	44	19	49
Sturm Graz	25	13	7	5	46	20	46
Austria Wien	25	11	6	8	33	29	39
Grazer AK	25	11	4	10	32	34	37
SV Ried	25	10	6	9	37	27	36
Salzburg	25	8	8	9	24	29	32
Linz ASK	25	6	5	14	26	38	23
Lustenau	25	4	6	15	17	42	18
Bregenz	25	4	5	16	16	54	17

BELGIUM

Sunday, February 27

Club Brugge 0
Anderlecht 2 (Goor 74, Stoica 86) Att: 21,600

Wednesday, March 1

Germinal BA 0
Lokeren 0 Att: 6,000

Saturday, March 4

Beveren 0
Standard 2 (Lukunku 70, Dias 89) Att: 6,500

Geel 1 (Daelemans 57)
Eendracht Aalst 2 (Dimbala 68, Arts 79) Att: 4,500

Lierse 5 (Cavens 17, Snoeckx 37, Van Meir 44, Somers 45, Spiteri 78)
Genk 0 Att: 10,000

Lokeren 2 (Janssens 64, Youla 90
Harelbeke 0 Att: 3,200

Lommel 1 (Simons pen 80
Gent 3 (Arst 22, 49, 90) Att: 5,000

Mouscron 2 (Seynhaeve 58, Tanghe 82)
Charleroi 1 (Rabbah 75) Att: 11,000

St Truiden 3 (Van Oekelen 24, Burg 47, Fiers 65)
Mechelen 1 (Peeters 56) Att: 6,000

Sunday, March 5

Club Brugge 2 (Janssen 7, Vermant 37)
Westerlo 0 Att: 13,000

Germinal BA 1 (Sonck 72)
Anderlecht 3 (Koller 12, 85, Ekakia 81) Att: 12,000

Friday, March 10

Gent 2 (Dahlum 31, Arst pen 89)
Club Brugge 0 Att: 9,700

Saturday, March 11

Anderlecht 4 (Zetterberg 28, pen 44, Koller 33, Stoica 89)
Eendracht Aalst 1 (Dimbala 39) Att: 25,500

Genk 1 (Hendrikx 75)
Lommel 2 (Mennes 34, Zouaoui 82) Att: 20,500

Mouscron 3 (Daelemans og 60, Lawaree 63, Tanghe 65)
Geel 1 (Delen 20) Att: 10,000

Standard 3 (Goossens 39, Van Buyten 48, Dias 84)
Lierse 1 (Cavens 27) Att: 26,000

Westerlo 3 (De Coninck 18, 70, T Brogno pen 74)
St Truiden 2 (Fiers pen 3, 59) Att: 6,000

Sunday, March 12

Charleroi 2 (Rojas 41, D Brogno 71)
Beveren 3 (Nuhiji 79, De Vuyst 83, Tarachulski 85) Att: 5,429

Harelbeke 1 (Van de Walle 86)
Germinal BA 0 Att: 5,000

Mechelen 0
Lokeren 0 Att: 6,000

Saturday, March 18

Geel 0
Anderlecht 0 Att: 10,000

Germinal BA 0
Mechelen 0 Att: 6,000

Lierse 2 (Van Meir 65, Van de Weyer 77)
Charleroi 0 Att: 8,000

Lokeren 0
Westerlo 0 Att: 3,000

St Truiden 0
Gent 0 Att: 9,500

Sunday, March 19

Beveren 1 (Torken 29)
Mouscron 1 (Vidovic 40) Att: 3,500

Club Brugge 2 (De Brul 23, Verheyen 43)
Genk 0 Att: 16,000

Eendracht Aalst 3 (Claeys 18, Thibaut 37, Sarli 82)
Harelbeke 0 Att: 4,000

Lommel 2 (Schoepers 23, Schoofs 90)
Standard 1 (Van Buyten 14) Att: 6,000

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Anderlecht	27	19	7	1	71	25	64
Standard	27	17	2	8	61	39	53
Gent	27	16	2	9	63	45	50
Club Brugge	27	15	4	8	56	27	49
Lierse	27	14	5	8	56	34	47
Mouscron	27	14	5	8	57	39	47
Germinal BA	27	12	7	8	43	37	43
Genk	27	12	6	9	52	46	42
Westerlo	27	11	7	9	48	57	40
Eendracht Aalst	27	11	2	14	49	55	35
Lokeren	27	9	8	10	44	50	35
Mechelen	27	10	5	12	40	56	35
Harelbeke	27	9	4	14	49	53	31
Beveren	27	6	7	14	37	57	25
St Truiden	27	6	5	16	29	56	23
Charleroi	27	5	6	16	31	55	21
Geel	27	3	10	14	21	48	19
Lommel	27	3	10	14	27	55	19

LEADING GOALSCORERS

24	Ole-Martin Arst (Gent)
20	Toni Brogno (Westerlo)
18	Jan Koller (Anderlecht)
17	David Paas (Harelbeke)
14	Eric Van Meir (Lierse)
14	Marcin Zewlakow (Mouscron)
13	Par Zetterberg (Anderlecht)
11	Elos Elonga Ekakia (Anderlecht)
11	Gert Verheyen (Club Brugge)
11	Sven Vermant (Club Brugge)

BELGIAN CUP – QTR-FINALS

Feb 26: Lierse 1 Lokeren 0; Standard 1 Bergen 0.
Feb 27: Genk 3 Gent 1; St Truiden 2 Eendracht Aalst 1.

LEAGUE CUP – SEMI-FINAL

Mar 14: Lierse 2 Mouscron 2 (Mouscron on pens).

BULGARIA

Feb 26: Chernomorets 2 Lev Sofia 3; Spartak Varna 4 Shumen 0; Botev 2 Olympic-Beroe 0; Dobrudzha 3 Belasitsa 1; Minjor 0 Velbazhd 2; Slavia 1 Lovech 0; Pirin 1 Lok Sofia 0.
Feb 27: CSKA 1 Neftohimik 4.
Mar 4: Velbazhd 3 CSKA 1; Neftohimik 0 Slavia 0; Lovech 4 Dobrudzha 1; Belasitsa 3 Botev 1; Olympic-Beroe 4 Pirin 0; Lok Sofia 4 Chernomorets 1.
Mar 5: Minjor 1 Spartak Varna 1; Lev Sofia 3 Shumen 0.
Mar 11: Shumen 1 Lok Sofia 1; Chernomorets 2 Olympic-Beroe 1; Pirin 1 Belasitsa 0; Botev 2 Lovech 0; Dobrudzha 0 Neftohimik 0; Slavia 1 Velbazhd 2; CSKA 6 Minjor 1.
Mar 12: Spartak Varna 0 Lev Sofia 1.
Mar 17: CSKA 1 Spartak Varna 0; Lok Sofia 1 Lev Sofia 1.
Mar 18: Velbazhd 0 Dobrudzha 0; Lovech 1 Pirin 1; Belasitsa 1 Chernomorets 0; Olympic-Beroe 1 Shumen 0.
Mar 19: Minjor 0 Slavia 3; Neftohimik 0 Botev 1.

BULGARIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lev Sofia	19	16	2	1	49	10	50
CSKA	19	14	1	4	38	16	43
Velbazhd	19	12	2	5	30	17	38
Neftohimik	19	10	6	3	26	12	36
Slavia	19	9	4	6	26	23	31
Lok Sofia	19	8	6	5	37	18	30
Lovech	19	9	2	8	30	20	29
Botev	19	9	1	9	27	26	28
Spartak Varna	19	7	3	9	22	32	24
Olympic-Beroe	19	7	2	10	20	29	23
Belasitsa	19	7	2	10	19	35	23
Chernomorets	19	6	4	9	19	27	22
Pirin	19	5	2	12	16	33	17
Minjor	19	5	1	13	22	37	16
Dobrudzha	19	4	3	12	12	32	15
Shumen	19	3	1	15	7	33	10

CROATIA

Feb 26: Dinamo 2 Zagreb 2; Hajduk 1 Slaven 0; Cibalia 0 Rijeka 0; Sibenik 0 Istra 1; Varteks 2 Vukovar '91 0; Hrvatski drag 3 Osijek 0.
Feb 29: Slaven 0 Dinamo 5; Hrvatski drag 2 Cibalia 0; Vukovar '91 3 Sibenik 0; Zagreb 1 Varteks 0; Osijek 2 Hajduk 0; Istra 1 Rijeka 0.
Mar 4: Hajduk 1 Hrvatski drag 0; Dinamo 3 Osijek 1; Cibalia 3 Istra 1; Sibenik 2 Zagreb 1; Varteks 0 Slaven 1; Rijeka 2 Vukovar '91 0.
Mar 7: Hajduk 1 Cibalia 1; Vukovar '91 1 Istra 3; Hrvatski drag 2 Dinamo 4; Zagreb 4 Rijeka 1; Osijek 1 Varteks 1; Slaven 0 Sibenik 0.
Mar 11: Dinamo 0 Hajduk 0; Sibenik 0 Osijek 2; Cibalia 0 Vukovar '91 1; Varteks 0 Hrvatski drag 0; Istra 0 Zagreb 0; Rijeka 1 Slaven 1.
Mar 19: Osijek 4 Hrvatski drag 2; Hajduk 0 Slaven 0; Zagreb 4 Istra 1; Cibalia 4 Sibenik 2; Rijeka 0 Vukovar '91 0; Dinamo 0 Varteks 1.

CROATIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo	23	15	6	2	60	18	51
Hajduk	23	14	6	3	46	21	48
Osijek	23	12	4	7	40	34	40
Rijeka	23	9	6	8	38	28	33
Zagreb	23	8	9	6	31	28	33
Cibalia	23	7	9	7	30	27	30
Varteks	23	8	5	10	24	31	29
Slaven	23	5	11	7	18	28	26
Hrvatski drag	23	6	6	11	30	45	24
Vukovar '91	23	5	7	11	19	33	22
Istra	23	5	5	13	23	43	20
Sibenik	23	3	8	12	17	40	17

CZECH REP

Feb 25: Drnovice 3 Bohemians 0.
Feb 26: Slavia 3 Kralove 0.
Feb 27: Dukla 3 Teplice 0; Jablonec 0 Sparta 2; Opava 3 Ceske Budejovice 2; Zizkov 1 Brno 0; Olomouc 4 Ostrava 1; Chmel Blsany 1 Liberec 0.
Mar 3: Bohemians 1 Zizkov 0; Liberec 0 Slavia 1.
Mar 4: Ostrava 3 Drnovice 1; Sparta 3 Teplice 2.
Mar 5: Chmel Blsany 2 Dukla 1; Kralove 0 Olomouc 0; Brno 1 Opava 0; Ceske Budejovice 2 Jablonec 0.
Mar 10: Teplice 3 Ceske Budejovice 0.
Mar 11: Dukla 1 Sparta 3.
Mar 12: Jablonec 0 Brno 0; Opava 0 Bohemians 0; Zizkov 3 Ostrava 1; Drnovice 1 Kralove 0; Olomouc 1 Liberec 1; Slavia 2 Chmel Blsany 1.
Mar 17: Ostrava 2 Opava 2.
Mar 18: Ceske Budejovice 1 Sparta 4.
Mar 19: Chmel Blsany 1 Olomouc 0; Liberec 0 Drnovice 0; Bohemians 2 Jablonec 0; Brno 2 Teplice 1; Kralove 0 Zizkov 0.
Mar 20: Slavia 3 Dukla 1.

CZECH REP

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Slavia	21	17	4	0	39	10	55
Sparta	21	16	3	2	56	19	51
Drnovice	21	11	4	6	28	19	37
Bohemians	21	8	7	6	19	17	31
Chmel Blsany	21	9	3	9	22	32	30
Teplice	21	7	6	8	29	31	27
Ceske Budejovice	21	8	3	10	26	32	27
Brno	21	7	5	9	23	25	26
Ostrava	21	6	7	8	30	32	25
Liberec	21	5	9	7	13	16	24
Dukla	21	6	6	9	22	30	24
Olomouc	21	4	11	6	24	28	23
Opava	21	5	7	9	26	28	22
Zizkov	21	5	6	10	28	37	21
Kralove	21	3	8	10	17	28	17
Jablonec	21	4	5	12	15	33	17

DENMARK

Mar 12: AGF 0 OB 1; AaB 0 FC Copenhagen 0; Brondby 2 Esbjerg 3; Vejle 3 AB 1; Viborg 1 Silkeborg 1.
Mar 13: Lyngby 1 Herfolge 0.
Mar 19: Esbjerg 0 AGF 1; FC Copenhagen 1 AB 2; Lyngby 0 Vejle 1; OB 0 Viborg 1; Herfolge 0 Brondby 2.
Mar 20: Silkeborg 1 AaB 1.

DENMARK

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Herfolge	20	11	4	5	32	26	37
Brondby	20	10	4	6	35	22	34
Lyngby	20	10	2	8	31	28	32
Viborg	20	9	5	6	27	26	32
Silkeborg	20	8	7	5	36	19	31
AaB	20	7	9	4	31	23	30
AB	20	8	6	6	31	26	30
FC Copenhagen	20	7	4	9	20	19	25
OB	20	4	8	8	16	26	20
AGF	19	4	6	9	17	29	18
Vejle	20	3	9	8	21	37	18
Esbjerg	19	5	2	12	20	36	17

ENGLAND

Saturday, February 26

Arsenal 3 (Ljungberg 22, 68, Bergkamp 36)
Southampton 1 (Richards 61) Att: 38,044

Bradford 1 (Windass 76)
Aston Villa 1 (Merson 38) Att: 18,276

Chelsea 2 (Desailly 2, Harley 65)
Watford 1 (Smart 39) Att: 34,928

Coventry 0
Tottenham 1 (Armstrong 82) Att: 23,077

Middlesbrough 0
Leeds 0 Att: 34,800

Sheffield Wed 0
Newcastle 2 (Gallacher 11, Shearer 86) Att: 29,212

Sunderland 1 (Rae 62)
Derby 1 (Christie 60) Att: 42,189

West Ham 0
Everton 4 (Barmby 8, 64, 67, Moore 71) Att: 26,025

Wimbledon 2 (Euell 2, Cort 62)
Man Utd 2 (Cruyff 30, Cole 80) Att: 26,129

Saturday, March 4

Derby 4 (Kinkladze 65, Christie 71, Burton 90, Sturridge 90)
Wimbledon 0 Att: 28,384

Everton 1 (Weir 33)
Sheffield Wed 1 (Quinn 49) Att: 32,020

Man Utd 1 (Solskjaer 45)
Liverpool 1 (Berger 27) Att: 61,592

Newcastle 0
Chelsea 1 (Poyet 22) Att: 36,448

Southampton 1 (Pahars 44)
Middlesbrough 1 (Ricard pen 44) Att: 15,223

Tottenham 1 (Iversen 14)
Bradford 1 (Lawrence 42) Att: 35,472

Watford 1 (Helguson 61)
West Ham 2 (Lomas 3, Wanchope 35) Att: 18,619

Sunday, March 5

Aston Villa 1 (Walker 62)
Arsenal 1 (Dixon 84) Att: 36,930

Leeds 3 (Kewell 5, Bridges 42, Wilcox 85)
Coventry 0 Att: 38,710

Leicester 5 (Collymore 17, 60, 88, Heskey 34, Oakes 90)
Sunderland 2 (Phillips 53, Quinn 75) Att: 20,432

Wednesday, March 8

West Ham 2 (Wanchope 17, Sinclair 48)
Southampton 0 Att: 23,484

Saturday, March 11

Aston Villa 1 (Ehiogu 45)
Coventry 0 Att: 33,177

Chelsea 1 (Wise 29)
Everton 1 (Cadamarteri 69) Att: 35,113

Liverpool 1 (Berger pen 2)
Sunderland 1 (Phillips pen 77) Att: 44,693

Man Utd 3 (Yorke 12, 70, 72)
Derby 1 (Strupar 66) Att: 61,619

Newcastle 1 (Gallacher 59)
Watford 0 Att: 36,433

Sheffield Wed 3 (Cresswell 55, Hinchcliffe 63, Alexandersson 66)
West Ham 1 (Lampard 10) Att: 21,147

Tottenham 7 (Richards og 28, Anderton 39, Armstrong 41, 64, Iversen 45, 78, 90)
Southampton 2 (Tessem 26, El Khalej 33) Att: 36,024

Wimbledon 2 (Ardley pen 33, Cort 87)
Leicester 1 (Taggart 55) Att: 14,316

Sunday, March 12

Bradford 1 (Beagrie 74)
Leeds 2 (Bridges 12, 62) Att: 18,276

Middlesbrough 2 (Ince 48, Ricard 63)
Arsenal 1 (Bergkamp 83) Att: 34,244

Wednesday, March 15

Coventry 1 (McAllister 86)
Everton 0 Att: 18,518

Liverpool 0
Aston Villa 0 Att: 43,615

Saturday, March 18

Coventry 4 (Roussel 7, Whelan 21, Eustace 85, Zuniga 86)
Bradford 0 Att: 19,201

Derby 0
Liverpool 2 (Owen 18, Camara 86) Att: 33,378

Leicester 0
Man Utd 2 (Beckham 33, Yorke 83) Att: 22,170

Southampton 2 (Davies 39, 63)
Aston Villa 0 Att: 15,218

Sunderland 1 (Quinn 66)
Middlesbrough 1 (Ziege 82) Att: 42,013

Watford 1 (Smart 89)
Sheffield Wed 0 Att: 15,840

West Ham 0
Chelsea 0 Att: 26,041

Sunday, March 19

Arsenal 2 (Henry 20, pen 45)
Tottenham 1 (Armstrong 31) Att: 38,131

Everton 0
Newcastle 2 (Hughes 79, Dyer 87) Att: 32,512

Leeds 4 (Bakke 23, 39, Harte pen 28, Kewell 83)
Wimbledon 1 (Euell 2) Att: 39,256

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man Utd	29	19	7	3	65	35	64
Leeds	29	19	3	7	48	31	60
Liverpool	29	15	8	6	42	23	53
Arsenal	29	15	6	8	50	31	51
Chelsea	29	14	9	6	39	25	51
Aston Villa	30	11	10	9	33	27	43
Tottenham	29	12	6	11	44	34	42
Sunderland	29	11	9	9	46	44	42
West Ham	29	11	9	9	39	39	42
Everton	30	10	11	9	48	40	41
Newcastle	29	11	7	11	49	42	40
Coventry	30	10	8	12	40	36	38
Leicester	28	11	5	12	41	42	38
Middlesbrough	29	10	7	12	31	40	37
Southampton	29	9	6	14	35	51	33
Wimbledon	29	7	11	11	40	54	32
Derby	29	7	7	15	33	44	28
Bradford	29	6	8	15	28	49	26
Sheffield Wed	29	5	6	18	27	56	21
Watford	29	5	3	21	25	60	18

LEADING GOALSCORERS

25	Kevin Phillips (Sunderland)
17	Andy Cole (Man Utd)
17	Alan Shearer (Newcastle)
15	Michael Bridges (Leeds)
15	Dwight Yorke (Man Utd)
13	Steffen Iversen (Tottenham)
12	Kevin Campbell (Everton)
12	Paolo Di Canio (West Ham)

LEAGUE CUP – FINAL

Sunday, February 27

Leicester 2 (Elliott 29, 81)
Tranmere 1 (Kelly 77) Att: 74,313

FRANCE

Saturday, February 26

Bastia 2 (Andre 49, 90)
Auxerre 0 Att: 7,000

Bordeaux 3 (Saveljic 73, Legwinski 85, Micoud 88)
Nantes 0 Att: 27,000

Lyon 2 (Vairelles 28, Anderson 53)
Marseille 0 Att: 40,000

Metz 1 (Meyrieu 35)
Sedan 1 (Quint 82) Att: 15,000

Montpellier 1 (Rui Pataca 68)
Lens 1 (Sakho 65) Att: 12,000

Paris SG 1 (Rabesandratana 90)
Nancy 1 (Cascarino pen 85) Att: 42,000

Rennes 2 (N'Diaye 45, Le Bris 86)
Le Havre 1 (Becanovic 31) Att: 9,000

Troyes 0
Saint-Etienne 1 (Potillon 4) Att: 15,000

Sunday, February 27

Strasbourg 3 (Echouafni 16, Bertin 39, Hemdani 62)
Monaco 2 (Trezeguet 22, 30) Att: 30,000

Saturday, March 11

Bastia 1 (Prince Daye 90)
Montpellier 0 Att: 6,000

Le Havre 1 (Deniaud 37)
Metz 0 Att: 10,000

Marseille 0
Bordeaux 2 (Dugarry 20, Laslandes 84) Att: 55,233

Nantes 3 (Carriere 11, Sibierski 45, Leroy 81)
Strasbourg 1 (Hemdani 76) Att: 28,000

Saint-Etienne 1 (Potillon 53)
Rennes 0 Att: 38,000

Sedan 1 (Mionnet 44)
Paris SG 1 (Christian 60) Att: 17,000

Sunday, March 12

Auxerre 0
Monaco 2 (Leonard 49, Gallardo 63) Att: 13,000

Lens 0
Troyes 1 (Saifi 77) Att: 38,000

Nancy 1 (Ze Alcino 70)
Lyon 0 Att: 15,000

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Monaco	28	18	4	6	56	25	58
Lyon	28	13	6	9	35	35	45
Paris SG	28	12	8	8	40	34	44
Sedan	28	12	7	9	38	36	43
Auxerre	28	12	6	10	30	30	42
Bordeaux	28	11	8	9	42	35	41
Bastia	28	10	10	8	35	30	40
Saint-Etienne	28	11	6	11	39	42	39
Lens	28	10	7	11	31	30	37
Rennes	28	10	7	11	36	36	37
Metz	28	7	15	6	32	27	36
Strasbourg	28	10	6	12	34	44	36
Nantes	28	10	5	13	35	35	35
Marseille	28	8	11	9	34	34	35
Nancy	28	9	7	12	32	35	34
Le Havre	28	9	7	12	27	39	34
Troyes	28	10	2	16	27	45	32
Montpellier	28	5	8	15	30	41	23

LEADING GOALSCORERS

18	Sonny Anderson (Lyon)
18	David Trezeguet (Monaco)
16	Marco Simone (Monaco)
15	Christian (Paris SG)
13	Alex (Saint-Etienne)
13	Lilian Laslandes (Bordeaux)
12	Shabani Nonda (Rennes)
12	Antoine Sibierski (Nantes)
11	Stephane Guivarc'h (Auxerre)
11	Sylvain Wiltord (Bordeaux)
10	Tony Cascarino (Nancy)
9	Frederic Nee (Bastia)

FRENCH CUP – LAST 16

Mar 3: Rennes 3 Lorient 2.
Mar 4: Calais 1 Cannes 1 (Calais on pens); Bordeaux 1 Metz 0; Nantes 0 Gueugnon 0 (Nantes on pens); Nimes 2 Amiens 0; Red Star 1 Lyon 2.
Mar 5: Pontivy 0 Monaco 4; Strasbourg 1 Paris SG 0.

QUARTER-FINALS

Mar 18: Calais 2 Strasbourg 1; Bordeaux 1 Nimes 0.
Mar 19: Nantes 2 Rennes 1 (aet); Lyon 1 Monaco 3.

GERMANY

Friday, February 25

Hansa Rostock 1 (Wibran 51)
Freiburg 1 (Holetschek og 54) Att: 10,000

Saturday, February 26

Bayer Leverkusen 3 (Kirsten 13, Ze Roberto 24, Rink 28)
Hertha 1 (Rehmer 9) Att: 22,500

Bayern Munich 4 (Zickler 34, 63, Paulo Sergio pen 46, Elber 85)
Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Reichenberger 49) Att: 45,000

Duisburg 1 (Beierle 24)
Stuttgart 3 (Balakov 26, 43, Dundee 84) Att: 12,120

Hamburg 2 (Prager 7, Butt pen 63)
Kaiserslautern 1 (Pettersson 79) Att: 45,000

Werder Bremen 2 (Trares 6, Pizarro 83)
Wolfsburg 2 (Munteanu 2, Hengen 63) Att: 27,650

Sunday, February 27

Borussia Dortmund 1 (Bobic 82)
1860 Munich 1 (Max 63) Att: 67,000

Unterhaching 3 (Breitenreiter 67, Grassov 69, Oberleitner 81)
Schalke 1 (Wilmots 24) Att: 9,000

Monday, February 28

Arminia Bielefeld 4 (Bode 14, 31, Weissenberger 17, 86)
Ulm 1 (Pleuler 6) Att: 13,050

Friday, March 3

Freiburg 1 (Muller 62)
Arminia Bielefeld 1 (Labbadia 18) Att: 23,500

Wolfsburg 4 (Sebescen 43, 54, 59, Rische 75)
Hamburg 4 (Mahdavikia 9, 41, Cardoso 21, 53) Att: 21,400

Saturday, March 4

Hertha 2 (Veit 79, Roy 80)
Unterhaching 1 (Haber 15) Att: 35,024

Kaiserslautern 1 (Basler 21)
Bayer Leverkusen 3 (Ze Roberto 36, Kirsten 38, Kovac 58) Att: 41,500

1860 Munich 4 (Max 44, 48, 58, Hassler pen 63)
Hansa Rostock 3 (Arvidsson 27, 51, Lantz 89) Att: 24,600

Schalke 3 (Zeyer og 3, Sand 79, 90)
Duisburg 0 Att: 36,410

Stuttgart 2 (Balakov 50, Lisztes 69)
Bayern Munich 0 Att: 46,500

Sunday, March 5

Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Fjortoft 76)
Borussia Dortmund 1 (Herrlich 5) Att: 41,400

Ulm 2 (Van der Haar 15, 51)
Werder Bremen 1 (Ailton 68) Att: 22,000

Friday, March 10

Stuttgart 0
Eintracht Frankfurt 2 (Yang 60, Gebhardt 80) Att: 24,000

Unterhaching 1 (Breitenreiter 86)
Kaiserslautern 2 (H Koch 10, Buck 16) Att: 10,000

Saturday, March 11

Arminia Bielefeld 2 (Labbadia 41, 45)
1860 Munich 2 (Max 68, Hassler pen 81) Att: 17,000

Bayer Leverkusen 4 (Kirsten 23, 51, Zivkovic 73, Beinlich 90)
Wolfsburg 1 (Juskowiak 62) Att: 22,500

Bayern Munich 4 (Kuffour 41, Zickler 47, 66, Santa Cruz 68)
Schalke 1 (Mpenza 81) Att: 48,000

Duisburg 0
Hertha 0 Att: 10,362

Hamburg 1 (Gravesen 90)
Ulm 2 (Scharinger 35, Maier 65) Att: 30,100

Sunday, March 12

Hansa Rostock 1 (Baumann og 90)
Borussia Dortmund 0 Att: 15,000

Werder Bremen 5 (Bode 4, 53, Pizarro 43, Baumann 51, Ailton pen 72)
Freiburg 2 (Weisshaupt 15, Zeyer pen 64) Att: 31,620

Friday, March 17

Eintracht Frankfurt 0
Hansa Rostock 0 Att: 32,200

Wolfsburg 2 (Feldhoff 40, Akpoborie 88)
Unterhaching 2 (Matthias Zimmermann 54, Haber 56) Att: 14,045

Saturday, March 18

Freiburg 0
Hamburg 2 (Cardoso 27, 53) Att: 25,000

Hertha 1 (Alves 75)
Bayern Munich 1 (Jeremies 32) Att: 74,600

Kaiserslautern 3 (Djorkaeff 29, Ramzy 54, Hristov 81)
Duisburg 2 (Zeyer pen 85, Buskens 90) Att: 37,549

Schalke 3 (Mpenza 58, 74, Waldoch 80)
Stuttgart 0 Att: 33,230

Ulm 1 (Leandro 90)
Bayer Leverkusen 9 (Emerson 10, 39, Rink 14, Kirsten 19, Neuville 68, Ze Roberto 74, 81, Ballack 75, Schneider 85) Att: 20,000

Sunday, March 19

Borussia Dortmund 1 (Moller 14)
Arminia Bielefeld 3 (Van der Ven 23, Stratos 26, Labbadia 64) Att: 64,500

1860 Munich 1 (Kurz 51)
Werder Bremen 0 Att: 22,800

GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern Munich	25	16	5	4	52	20	53
Bayer Leverkusen	25	15	8	2	54	27	53
Hamburg	25	12	9	4	55	30	45
1860 Munich	25	11	7	7	41	36	40
Kaiserslautern	25	12	3	10	37	44	39
Werder Bremen	25	10	6	9	52	40	36
Hertha	25	9	9	7	32	38	36
Schalke	25	8	10	7	36	33	34
Wolfsburg	25	8	10	7	37	44	34
Stuttgart	25	10	3	12	28	33	33
B Dortmund	25	7	11	7	29	23	32
Unterhaching	25	8	6	11	28	31	30
Ulm	25	8	6	11	30	44	30
Hansa Rostock	25	6	10	9	32	45	28
Freiburg	25	6	8	11	32	38	26
Eintracht	25	7	4	14	29	36	25
A Bielefeld	25	4	7	14	25	44	19
Duisburg	25	3	8	14	26	49	17

LEADING GOALSCORERS

13	Ulf Kirsten (Bayer Leverkusen)
13	Martin Max (1860 Munich)
12	Ebbe Sand (Schalke)
11	Ailton (Werder Bremen)
10	Marco Bode (Werder Bremen)
9	Magnus Arvidsson (Hansa Rostock)
9	Stefan Beinlich (Bayer Leverkusen)
9	Hans-Jorg Butt (Hamburg)
9	Youri Djorkaeff (Kaiserslautern)
9	Giovane Elber (Bayern Munich)
9	Paulo Sergio (Bayern Munich)
9	Claudio Pizarro (Werder Bremen)
9	Michael Preetz (Hertha)
9	Adel Sellimi (Freiburg)
9	Tony Yeboah (Hamburg)

GREECE

Feb 27: Panahaiki 1 Xanthi 1; Ethnikos A 1 PAOK 1; Proodeftiki 0 OFI 0; Paniliakos 1 Trikala 3; Apollon 0 Ionikos 2; Olympiakos 5 Kavala 0; Iraklis 3 AEK 1; Panionios 1 Aris 3.
Feb 28: Kalamata 0 Panathinaikos 0.
Mar 4: Trikala 0 Olympiakos 2.
Mar 5: Panahaiki 1 Kalamata 2; Panathinaikos 4 Ethnikos A 0; Xanthi 2 Proodeftiki 1; PAOK 4 Iraklis 0; OFI 0 Panionios 2; AEK 1 Paniliakos 0; Aris 2 Apollon 1.
Mar 6: Ionikos 2 Kavala 0.
Mar 11: Paniliakos 0 PAOK 4.
Mar 12: Proodeftiki 2 Panahaiki 2; Iraklis 1 Panathinaikos 3; Panionios 4 Xanthi 0; Olympiakos 3 AEK 0; Kavala 1 Aris 0; Ionikos 5 Trikala 1.
Mar 13: Kalamata 1 Ethnikos A 0; Apollon 1 OFI 2.
Mar 18: Proodeftiki 1 Kalamata 2.
Mar 19: Panahaiki 1 Panionios 0; Panathinaikos 3 Paniliakos 1; Xanthi 2 Apollon 0; OFI 2 Kavala 2; AEK 5 Ionikos 1; Aris 3 Trikala 3; PAOK 0 Olympiakos 2.
Mar 20: Ethnikos A 3 Iraklis 1.

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olympiakos	24	22	0	2	67	14	66
Panathinaikos	24	20	3	1	62	16	63
OFI	24	14	7	3	41	28	49
AEK	24	12	4	8	43	31	40
Aris	24	11	6	7	36	28	39
Iraklis	24	11	3	10	41	41	36
PAOK	24	9	8	7	40	30	35
Xanthi	24	9	8	7	26	28	35
Panionios	24	11	1	12	37	43	34
Ionikos	24	7	10	7	30	31	31
Paniliakos	24	8	4	12	29	33	28
Ethnikos A	24	8	3	13	22	35	27
Kalamata	24	6	7	11	24	42	25
Panahaiki	24	5	8	11	24	34	23
Kavala	24	6	5	13	24	43	23
Trikala	24	4	5	15	23	50	17
Proodeftiki	24	3	7	14	17	37	16
Apollon	24	3	5	16	16	38	14

HOLLAND

Friday, February 25

Roda JC 1 (Valgaeren 56)
PSV 2 (Van Nistelrooy 4, Bruggink 70) Att: 8,550

Saturday, February 26

Feyenoord 3 (Tomasson 13, Cruz pen 61, Korneev 76)
MVV 0 Att: 28,500

Fortuna 2 (Gerritsen 25, Van der Schaaf 57)
Willem II 0 Att: 8,500

Sunday, February 27

RKC 1 (Petrov 29)
Vitesse 1 (Van Hooijdonk pen 40) Att: 5,600

Sparta 1 (Nielsen 27)
NEC 0 Att: 5,943

Twente 2 (De Witte 39, Ter Avest 78)
Heerenveen 0 Att: 13,200

Utrecht 3 (Groenendijk 30, 44, Van den Berg og 56)
AZ 3 (Bosman 32, Ricksen 45, Fertout 59) Att: 13,500

Tuesday, February 29

Roda JC 3 (Tchoutang 38, Luypers 45, Lawal 64)
Cambuur 1 (Goudmijn 51) Att: 6,740

Friday, March 3

AZ 2 (Huiberts 37, Bosman 49)
Willem II 2 (Shoukov 38, Ramzi 81) Att: 6,814

Vitesse 2 (Kreek 75, Sikora 85)
Roda JC 0 Att: 25,500

Saturday, March 4

Cambuur 2 (Nelisse 52, Loontjens 89)
MVV 2 (Gudjonsson 30, 63) Att: 6,500

Sunday, March 5

De Graafschap 3 (Fuchs 19, 75, Viscaal 56)
Den Bosch 0 Att: 8,750

Heerenveen 3 (Hansma 35, Lurling 56, Nurmela 89)
Feyenoord 0 Att: 14,000

NEC 0
Utrecht 1 (Kuyt 50) Att: 7,000

Sparta 3 (Van der Meer 11, Elkhattabi 52, Marbus 57)
RKC 1 (Van der Leegte 53) Att: 7,480

Twente 0
Ajax 0 Att: 13,200

Friday, March 10

AZ 4 (Ricksen 20, Huiberts 35, Fertout 81, Hernandez 90)
RKC 0 Att: 6,515

NEC 1 (Renfurm 44)
Fortuna 2 (Amoah 65, Roest 86) Att: 7,000

Saturday, March 11

Feyenoord 3 (Cruz 20, Tomasson 67, 76)
Den Bosch 0 Att: 27,500

MVV 0
De Graafschap 2 (Ax 19, Viscaal 65) Att: 4,500

Roda JC 4 (Van der Meer og 10, Tchoutang 23, Van Houdt 65, 87)
Sparta 1 (Nielsen 14) Att: 7,150

Twente 1 (De Witte 23)
Cambuur 0 Att: 12,900

Willem II 2 (Sektioui pen 70, 77)
Heerenveen 3 (Lurling 12, 85, Talan 55) Att: 14,500

Sunday, March 12

PSV 2 (Bouma 33, 82)
Utrecht 1 (Van der Gaag 74) Att: 28,000

Wednesday, March 15

Fortuna 2 (Amoah 23, 42)
Ajax 0 Att: 13,000

Friday, March 17

Cambuur 2 (Van Utrecht 35, Nelisse 73)
Feyenoord 3 (Cruz 3, Van Vossen 29, Bosveit 43) Att: 9,500

NEC 2 (Hesp 44, Arts 89)
Willem II 1 (Ramzi 6) Att: 7,000

Saturday, March 18

Heerenveen 3 (Nurmela 36, Lurling 58, 89)
MVV 1 (Gudjonsson 1) Att: 13,750

PSV 6 (Bruggink 15, 21, 49, 53, Nilis 71, Bouma 79)
De Graafschap 0 Att: 28,000

Sunday, March 19

Ajax 0
Twente 1 (Vennegoor of Hesselink 29) Att: 41,234

RKC 2 (De Graef 54, Nascimento 90)
Roda JC 2 (Vrede 18, Doomernik 75) Att: 5,400

Sparta 2 (Elkhattabi 21, Inia 80)
Fortuna 3 (Gerritsen 13, Amoah 18, 62) Att: 6,568

Utrecht 2 (De Marchi og 61, Kuijt 88)
Vitesse 0 Att: 13,900

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PSV	26	20	2	4	81	21	62
Feyenoord	26	15	7	4	52	31	52
Twente	26	14	10	2	42	21	52
Heerenveen	26	16	3	7	50	30	51
Ajax	25	14	5	6	56	35	47
AZ	26	14	4	8	56	41	46
Vitesse	26	12	8	6	48	38	44
Roda JC	26	12	5	9	45	37	41
Willem II	26	11	5	10	42	48	38
Utrecht	26	11	3	12	43	46	36
RKC	26	10	4	12	36	52	34
Sparta	26	9	3	14	38	54	30
Fortuna	26	7	7	12	36	41	28
De Graafschap	26	6	8	12	32	44	26
NEC	26	6	4	16	31	49	22
MVV	26	4	6	16	32	57	18
Cambuur	26	2	6	18	22	55	12
Den Bosch	25	2	6	17	22	64	12

LEADING GOALSCORERS

29	Ruud Van Nistelrooy (PSV)
21	Pierre Van Hooijdonk (Vitesse)
15	Anthony Lurling (Heerenveen)
14	John Bosman (AZ)
14	Arnold Bruggink (PSV)
14	Vennegoor of Hesselink (Twente)
13	Luc Nilis (PSV)
12	Richard Knopper (Ajax)
12	Nikos Machlas (Ajax)
12	Bob Peeters (Roda JC)

HUNGARY

Feb 22: Gyor 3 Szeged 0.
Feb 26: MTK 1 Ujpest 0; Zalaegerszeg 0 Nagykanizsa 0; Nyiregyhaza 2 Diosgyor 0; Dunaferr 3 Debrecen 2; Gazszer 1 Siofok 1; Haladas 1 Kispest-Honved 2; Vac 1 Tatabanya 1.
Feb 28: Vasas 3 Ferencvaros 3.
Mar 3: Kispest-Honved 0 Vasas 4.
Mar 4: Tatabanya 0 MTK 4; Siofok 1 Zalaegerszeg 1; Diosgyor 2 Gyor 0; Debrecen 2 Nyiregyhaza 0; Ferencvaros 4 Gazszer 1.
Mar 5: Nagykanizsa 3 Vac 1.
Mar 7: Gazszer 1 Kispest-Honved 2; Haladas 0 Gyor 3.
Mar 8: Diosgyor 0 Debrecen 1; Dunaferr 2 Tatabanya 0; Nyiregyhaza 2 Ujpest 1; Zalaegerszeg 0 Ferencvaros 0; Vac 1 Siofok 0; MTK 3 Nagykanizsa 1.
Mar 10: Haladas 1 Vasas 2.
Mar 11: Tatabanya 2 Nyiregyhaza 1; Siofok 2 MTK 2; Gyor 1 Debrecen 1; Ferencvaros 8 Vac 0; Ujpest 5 Diosgyor 0; Kispest-Honved 1 Zalaegerszeg 0.
Mar 12: Nagykanizsa 0 Dunaferr 1.
Mar 17: Debrecen 2 Ujpest 3.
Mar 18: Diosgyor 1 Tatabanya 2; Dunaferr 3 Siofok 0; Gazszer 1 Haladas 2; Nyiregyhaza 2 Nagykanizsa 0; MTK 2 Ferencvaros 3; Vac 0 Kispest-Honved 1; Vasas 1 Gyor 0.

HUNGARY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dunaferr	21	14	6	1	47	17	48
Vasas	20	13	2	5	40	20	41
MTK	21	11	7	3	40	19	40
Ferencvaros	21	9	6	6	41	23	33
Debrecen	21	9	6	6	29	25	33
Ujpest	20	8	6	6	39	28	30
Kispest-Honved	22	8	6	8	23	28	30
Tatabanya	21	7	9	5	21	27	30
Gyor	20	7	6	7	31	21	27
Zalaegerszeg	20	6	9	5	22	14	27
Gazszer	20	6	8	6	23	30	26
Nyiregyhaza	21	7	5	9	21	33	26
Diosgyor	21	5	5	11	20	37	20
Nagykanizsa	21	4	7	10	17	27	19
Haladas	20	5	3	12	21	34	18
Siofok*	21	5	4	12	16	34	16
Vac	21	2	5	14	17	51	11

**3 pts deducted*

ITALY

Saturday, February 26

Lazio 2 (Negro 18, Salas 47)
Udinese 1 (Locatelli 89) Att: 42,207

Parma 0
Fiorentina 4 (Balbo 21, Rui Costa 65, 75, Mijatovic 85) Att: 18,442

Sunday, February 27

Bari 1 (Osmanovski 45)
Torino 1 (Ferrante 57) Att: 14,904

Bologna 0
Piacenza 0 Att: 24,292

Cagliari 0
Milan 0 Att: 25,000

Inter 3 (Vieri 42, Zamorano 53, Recoba 83)
Venezia 0 Att: 60,093

Juventus 2 (Davids 31, Inzaghi 46)
Roma 1 (Delvecchio 37) Att: 45,115

Perugia 0
Verona 0 Att: 9,637

Reggina 2 (Pirlo 11, Kallon pen 41)
Lecce 1 (Lucarelli pen 72) Att: 23,612

Saturday, March 4

Fiorentina 2 (Balbo 58, Rui Costa 83)
Piacenza 1 (Di Napoli 90) Att: 33,579

Udinese 5 (Margiotta 27, Jorgensen 45, Fiore pen 74, 85, Muzzi 76)
Cagliari 2 (Oliveira 48, Macellari 68) Att: 17,187

Sunday, March 5

Juventus 2 (Conte 42, Del Piero pen 53)
Bari 0 Att: 36,748

Lecce 0
Lazio 1 (Nedved 37) Att: 16,642

Milan 1 (Shevchenko pen 90)
Inter 2 (Zamorano 43, Di Biagio 63) Att: 80,736

Parma 3 (Fuser 3, Crespo 35, 45)
Reggina 0 Att: 20,085

Roma 1 (Delvecchio 66)
Torino 0 Att: 53,430

Venezia 1 (Maniero 58)
Perugia 2 (Amoruso 32, Cappioli 73) Att: 8,248

Verona 0
Bologna 0 Att: 14,559

Saturday, March 11

Bologna 1 (Andersson 55)
Venezia 1 (Ganz 28) Att: 24,603

Lazio 2 (Inzaghi 83, Pancaro 88)
Inter 2 (Recoba 19, Di Biagio 79) Att: 66,581

Sunday, March 12

Bari 0
Parma 1 (Amoroso 45) Att: 21,906

Cagliari 1 (Mboma 44)
Roma 0 Att: 16,842

Milan 3 (Albertini 17, Shevchenko 34, pen 61)
Verona 3 (Apolloni 53, Laursen 55, Cammarata 90) Att: 54,031

Perugia 2 (Calori 79, Cappioli 84)
Lecce 2 (Sesa 65, Lucarelli pen 74) Att: 10,369

Piacenza 0
Juventus 2 (Inzaghi 68, 74) Att: 19,928

Reggina 0
Udinese 0 Att: 23,503

Torino 1 (Ferrante 20)
Fiorentina 0 Att: 18,647

Saturday, March 18

Fiorentina 2 (Batistuta 18, Mijatovic 60)
Cagliari 0 Att: 34,090

Inter 1 (Recoba 49)
Bologna 1 (Paramatti 84) Att: 61,224

Sunday, March 19

Bari 0
Perugia 2 (Amoruso 21, pen 38) Att: 13,994

Juventus 3 (Brambilla og 23, Lentini og 67, Del Piero pen 72)
Torino 2 (Ferrante pen 33, 88) Att: 57,586

Parma 1 (Crespo pen 63)
Piacenza 0 Att: 18,051

Roma 0
Reggina 2 (Cozza 28, Cirillo 87) Att: 56,808

Udinese 2 (Sosa 24, Warley 89)
Lecce 1 (Sesa 36) Att: 17,483

Venezia 1 (Maniero 11)
Milan 0 Att: 11,904

Verona 1 (Morfeo 29)
Lazio 0 Att: 19,606

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juventus	26	17	8	1	40	13	59
Lazio	26	14	8	4	46	25	50
Inter	26	14	6	6	49	24	48
Milan	26	12	10	4	52	34	46
Roma	26	13	6	7	50	28	45
Parma	26	12	7	7	39	30	43
Udinese	26	11	7	8	46	35	40
Fiorentina	26	9	9	8	30	30	36
Perugia	26	9	6	11	28	43	33
Bologna	26	7	10	9	21	25	31
Reggina	26	6	11	9	24	33	29
Lecce	26	7	8	11	26	37	29
Bari	26	7	7	12	27	40	28
Torino	26	6	9	11	26	35	27
Verona	26	6	9	11	26	38	27
Venezia	26	6	5	15	23	45	23
Cagliari	26	3	11	12	23	41	20
Piacenza	26	3	7	16	13	33	16

LEADING GOALSCORERS

19 Andrii Shevchenko (Milan)
17 Hernan Crespo (Parma)
15 Filippo Inzaghi (Juventus)
15 Vincenzo Montella (Roma)
14 Marco Ferrante (Torino)
14 Cristiano Lucarelli (Lecce)
13 Gabriel Batistuta (Fiorentina)
13 Christian Vieri (Inter)
11 Marco Delvecchio (Roma)
11 Roberto Muzzi (Udinese)
11 Marcelo Salas (Lazio)
10 Oliver Bierhoff (Milan)

POLAND

Mar 4: Gornik 1 Amica 3; LKS 1 Legia 1; Wisla 3 Odra 1; R Chorzow 3 Petro Plock 1; Halex 1 R Radzionkow 0.
Mar 5: Lech 2 Zaglebie 0; Polonia 1 Widzew 0; Pogon 1 Groclin 0.
Mar 11: Pogon 4 Lech 3; Groclin 3 Halex 2; R Radzionkow 0 Polonia 2; Legia 0 Gornik 0.
Mar 12: Widzew 1 R Chorzow 0; Petro Plock 1 Wisla 1; Odra 2 LKS 0; Amica 1 Zaglebie 1.
Mar 15: Lech 2 Amica 1; Zaglebie 2 Legia 3; Gornik 0 Odra 2; LKS 1 Petro Plock 2; Wisla 3 Widzew 1; R Chorzow 2 R Radzionkow 1; Polonia 1 Groclin 0; Halex 1 Pogon 1.
Mar 18: Halex 1 Lech 1; Pogon 0 Polonia 2; Groclin 0 R Chorzow 3; R Radzionkow 4 Wisla 1; Petro Plock 1 Gornik 0; Odra 1 Zaglebie 1; Legia 2 Amica 0.
Mar 19: Widzew 2 LKS 0.

POLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Polonia	19	12	4	3	29	17	40
R Chorzow	19	11	6	2	36	17	39
Legia	19	8	10	1	36	20	34
Wisla	19	9	6	4	34	24	33
Pogon	19	8	7	4	29	25	31
Amica	19	6	8	5	29	25	26
Petro Plock	19	7	5	7	23	26	26
Halex	19	6	8	5	22	27	26
Zaglebie	19	6	7	6	18	21	25
Odra	19	6	5	8	23	24	23
Widzew	19	5	6	8	25	30	21
R Radzionkow	19	6	3	10	20	30	21
Gornik	19	4	8	7	27	25	20
Lech	19	4	6	9	26	34	18
LKS	19	3	7	9	15	22	16
Groclin	19	2	2	15	12	37	8

PORTUGAL

Friday, February 25

Sporting Braga 0
Uniao Leiria 2 (Krpan 24, 80)

Saturday, February 26

FC Porto 2 (Drulovic 13, Domingos 30)
Belenenses 1 (Lito 44)

Sunday, February 27

Alverca 2 (Rui Borges 12, Gaspar 60)
Guimaraes 1 (Edmilson 70)

Estrela Amadora 3 (Eric Gaucho 17, 74, Kenedy 82)
Benfica 0

Farense 3 (Marinescu pen 34, Hassan Nader 78, Lunari 89)
Salgueiros 2 (Pedro 70, Feher 72)

Gil Vicente 5 (Guga 25, Pedro Santos 34, 83, Cuc 80, Fangueiro 85)
Maritimo 1 (Toedtli 7)

Rio Ave 1 (Miguelito 86)
Campomaiorense 0

Vitoria Setubal 1 (Chiquinho Conde 44)
Santa Clara 0

Monday, February 28

Boavista 0
Sporting Lisbon 1 (Pedro Barbosa 1)

Friday, March 3

Maritimo 1 (Jokanovic pen 44)
Boavista 1 (Rui Bento 40)

Saturday, March 4

Benfica 3 (Nuno Gomes 13, 88, Carlos og 17)
Gil Vicente 0

Guimaraes 1 (Brandao 76)
Sporting Braga 0

Salgueiros 1 (Panduru pen 80)
Estrela Amadora 1 (Eric Gaucho 69)

Santa Clara 1 (Prokopenko 59)
Farense 2 (Paulo Ferreira 12, Hassan Nader 25)

Sporting Lisbon 1 (Edmilson 34)
Alverca 1 (Hugo Costa 57)

Uniao Leiria 0
FC Porto 1 (Domingos 68)

Vitoria Setubal 2 (Chiquinho Conde 17, 33)
Rio Ave 0

Monday, March 6

Belenenses 2 (Franklim 32, Filgueira 65)
Campomaiorense 2 (Constantino 5, Wellington 64)

Friday, March 10

Sporting Braga 0
Sporting Lisbon 2 (Ayew 76, Cesar Prates 88)

Saturday, March 11

FC Porto 2 (Domingos 56, Jardel 76)
Guimaraes 1 (Edmilson 88)

Sunday, March 12

Alverca 1 (Milinkovic 6)
Maritimo 1 (Mariano 9)

Boavista 1 (Litos 89)
Benfica 1 (Kandaurov 29)

Campomaiorense 2 (Beke 41, Constantino 54)
Uniao Leiria 0

Farense 0
Vitoria Setubal 0

Gil Vicente 2 (Carlitos 55, Fangueiro 88)
Salgueiros 0

Rio Ave 3 (Fabio 20, Luis Coentrao 47, 88)
Belenenses 0

Monday, March 13

Estrela Amadora 0
Santa Clara 0

Saturday, March 18

Sporting Lisbon 2 (Andre Cruz 16, Acosta 37)
FC Porto 0

Sunday, March 19

Benfica 3 (Sabry 4, Uribe pen 14, Joao Tomas 89)
Alverca 2 (Duda 39, 71)

Farense 4 (Ze-To 41, 74, Marinescu 77, Lunari 87)
Rio Ave 0

Guimaraes 4 (Brandao 24, Riva 59, Edmilson 65, Jairson 75)
Campomaiorense 1 (Torrao 38)

Maritimo 1 (Iliev 32)
Sporting Braga 0

Salgueiros 1 (Paquito 81)
Boavista 3 (Whelliton 4, 89, Andre 65)

Santa Clara 0
Gil Vicente 0

Uniao Leiria 1 (Dinda 87)
Belenenses 0

Vitoria Setubal 1 (Meyong 64)
Estrela Amadora 0

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sporting Lisbon	26	17	7	2	44	19	58
FC Porto	26	17	6	3	49	16	57
Benfica	26	16	6	4	42	22	54
Guimaraes	26	14	4	8	42	27	46
Maritimo	26	10	9	7	29	25	39
Boavista	26	11	6	9	27	23	39
Gil Vicente	26	10	8	8	33	27	38
Estrela Amadora	26	7	12	7	27	25	33
Alverca	26	8	7	11	29	37	31
Belenenses	26	6	12	8	27	29	30
Farense	26	7	9	10	27	46	30
Uniao Leiria	26	7	8	11	24	28	29
Rio Ave	26	7	7	12	28	39	28
Sporting Braga	26	8	3	15	29	36	27
Campomaiorense	26	7	6	13	24	38	27
Salgueiros	26	7	5	14	21	35	26
Victoria Setubal	26	6	5	15	19	38	23
Santa Clara	26	4	10	12	23	34	22

LEADING GOALSCORERS

28 Mario Jardel (FC Porto)
16 Eric Gaucho (Estrela Amadora)
15 Alberto Acosta (Sporting Lisbon)
15 Nuno Gomes (Benfica)
14 Brandao (Guimaraes)
12 Toedtli (Maritimo)
11 Hugo Henrique (Rio Ave)
10 Edmilson (Guimaraes)

ROMANIA

Mar 3: Brasov 2 Arges 1.
Mar 4: Resita 0 U Craiova 0; Extensiv 0 Dinamo 1; Farul 1 Astra 1; Onesti 1 Bacau 0; Petrolul 1 Gloria 2; Rocar 3 Otelul 2.
Mar 5: Rapid 2 Steaua 2; National 5 Ceahlaul 1.
Mar 10: Otelul 1 Brasov 0.
Mar 11: Astra 2 Resita 1; Ceahlaul 6 Onesti 0; Extensiv 0 Petrolul 0; Arges 0 Rapid 1; Bacau 1 Farul 1; Gloria 2 Rocar 1.
Mar 12: Dinamo 5 U Craiova 2; Steaua 2 National 3.
Mar 17: Resita 1 Bacau 2.
Mar 18: Farul 1 Ceahlaul 0; Brasov 4 Gloria 2; Petrolul 1 Dinamo 2; Rapid 2 Otelul 1; Rocar 3 Extensiv 1; U Craiova 0 Astra 0.
Mar 19: National 4 Arges 1; Onesti 1 Steaua 3.
Mar 22: Ceahlaul 4 Resita 2; Dinamo 2 Astra 1; Extensiv 0 Brasov 1; Arges 2 Onesti 0; Bacau 3 U Craiova 0; Gloria 1 Rapid 2; Otelul 2 National 0; Petrolul 4 Rocar 1; Steaua 1 Farul 0.

ROMANIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo	24	21	2	1	68	19	65
Rapid	24	16	4	4	42	24	52
Arges	24	14	3	7	34	22	45
Ceahlaul	24	13	4	7	38	33	43
Gloria	24	12	2	10	35	32	38
Steaua	23	11	3	9	44	43	36
Bacau	24	10	6	8	27	27	36
Astra	24	10	5	9	35	28	35
National	24	9	4	11	39	32	31
Brasov	24	9	3	12	36	34	30
U Craiova	24	8	6	10	27	27	30
Otelul	24	9	3	12	37	38	30
Petrolul	24	8	5	11	30	36	29
Rocar	23	9	0	14	32	39	27
Farul	24	7	6	11	27	37	27
Onesti	24	7	3	14	26	55	24
Resita	24	4	6	14	28	53	18
Extensiv	24	4	3	17	16	42	15

SCOTLAND

Wednesday, February 23

Dundee 1 (Bayne 87)
Aberdeen 3 (Dow 48, Stavrum 55, Bernard 60) Att: 5,784

Saturday, February 26

Aberdeen 4 (Stavrum 18, 46, Guntveit 30, Anderson 44)
Hibernian 0 Att: 12,625

Hearts 0
Kilmarnock 0 Att: 14,243

St Johnstone 2 (Griffin 51, Lowndes 90)
Dundee Utd 0 Att: 4,732

Sunday, February 27

Dundee 1 (Tweed 28)
Rangers 7 (Wallace 2, 30, 32, Vidmar 23, 87, Albertz 38, Rozental 45) Att: 9,297

Wednesday, March 1

Celtic 6 (Johnson 15, 26, 64, Viduka 32, pen 45, Petrov 42)
Dundee 2 (Robertson 56, Grady 77) Att: 56,228

Motherwell 0
Hearts 2 (Jackson 45, Wales 60) Att: 5,588

Saturday, March 4

Dundee Utd 0
Hearts 1 (Cameron pen 54) Att: 6,928

Kilmarnock 2 (Durrant 10, Dindeleux 56)
Dundee 2 (Annand 80, Grady 82) Att: 8,460

Motherwell 1 (Goodman 53)
Aberdeen 0 Att: 7,528

Rangers 0
St Johnstone 0 Att: 49,907

Sunday, March 5

Hibernian 2 (McGinlay 22, Miller 65)
Celtic 1 (Viduka 73) Att: 12,226

Wednesday, March 8

Celtic 0
Rangers 1 (Wallace 86) Att: 59,800

Saturday, March 11

Celtic 4 (Burchill 17, 71, Viduka 65, 68)
St Johnstone 1 (Connolly 34) Att: 59,530

Wednesday, March 15

Dundee Utd 2 (Hannah 62, Ferraz 90)
Kilmarnock 2 (Durrant 45, 48) Att: 6,966

St Johnstone 0
Hearts 1 (McSwegan 64) Att: 4,668

Saturday, March 18

Hibernian 3 (Latapy 37, Sauzee 60, Paatelainen 82)
Hearts 1 (Jackson 26) Att: 15,908

Rangers 6 (Wallace 21, 42, 70, Rozental pen 29, Albertz 36, Tugay pen 90)
Motherwell 2 (Kemble 18, McCulloch 41) Att: 49,622

St Johnstone 0
Kilmarnock 0 Att: 4,688

Tuesday, March 21

Hibernian 1 (Paatelainen 22)
Dundee 2 (Falconer 62, 90) Att: 10,208

Wednesday, March 22

Hearts 3 (Cameron 9, Wales 47, Fulton 87)
Aberdeen 0 Att: 13,249

SCOTLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	25	19	5	1	71	20	62
Celtic	25	16	2	7	70	26	50
Hearts	26	11	6	9	39	33	39
Motherwell	25	9	8	8	35	47	35
Hibernian	27	8	9	10	40	46	33
Dundee Utd	24	9	5	10	27	38	32
St Johnstone	27	7	9	11	25	32	30
Dundee	26	8	3	15	32	52	27
Kilmarnock	26	3	13	10	27	35	22
Aberdeen	25	6	4	15	30	67	22

LEADING GOALSCORERS
25 Mark Viduka (Celtic)
14 Rod Wallace (Rangers)
12 Billy Dodds (Rangers; 10 for Dundee Utd)

SCOTTISH CUP – 4TH RND

Feb 26: Motherwell 3 Ayr 4.

4TH RND – REPLAYS

Feb 22: Dundee Utd 4 Alloa 0.
Feb 29: Aberdeen 1 Inverness Caledonian Thistle 0; Clydebank 0 Hibernian 3; Falkirk 3 Berwick 0.

QUARTER-FINALS

Mar 11: Ayr 2 Partick Thistle 0; Hibernian 3 Falkirk 1.
Mar 12: Dundee Utd 0 Aberdeen 1; Rangers 4 Hearts 1.

LEAGUE CUP – FINAL

Sunday, March 19

Aberdeen 0
Celtic 2 (Riseth 15, Johnson 58) Att: 50,073

SPAIN

Saturday, February 26

Numancia 1 (Soria 77)
Valencia 2 (Mendieta 3, Claudio Lopez 59) Att: 10,000

Real Madrid 3 (Roberto Carlos 6, Anelka 19, Morientes 52)
Barcelona 0 Att: 80,000

Sunday, February 27

Alaves 2 (Magno 82, Bejbl og 86)
Atletico Madrid 0 Att: 17,000

Athletic Bilbao 2 (Urzaiz 38, Tiko 51)
Malaga 2 (Dario Silva 23, Movilla pen 39) Att: 38,000

Betis Sevilla 1 (Denilson pen 3)
Sevilla 1 (Tsartas pen 75) Att: 45,000

Espanyol 5 (Tamudo 19, Posse 40, 49, Arteaga 47, Velamazan 90)
Rayo Vallecano 1 (Canabal 9) Att: 19,000

La Coruna 2 (Makaay 8, Djalminha 65)
Mallorca 1 (Diego Tristan 90) Att: 30,000

Racing Santander 0
Real Sociedad 0 Att: 17,000

Valladolid 2 (Jo 34, 70)
Oviedo 1 (Bango 84) Att: 14,000

Zaragoza 2 (Acuna 57, Milosevic 73)
Celta Vigo 1 (McCarthy 38) Att: 18,000

Saturday, March 4

Barcelona 4 (Gabri 27, Dani 63, 77, Figo 85)
Numancia 0 Att: 60,000

Oviedo 1 (Gonzalez 84)
Real Madrid 1 (Raul 70) Att: 15,024

Valencia 2 (Oscar 80, Claudio Lopez 86)
Athletic Bilbao 0 Att: 40,000

Sunday, March 5

Atletico Madrid 0
Betis Sevilla 0 Att: 40,000

Celta Vigo 2 (McCarthy 36, Mostovoi 63)
Racing Santander 0 Att: 24,000

Malaga 1 (Dario Silva 4)
La Coruna 0 Att: 25,000

Mallorca 1 (Carlos 19)
Zaragoza 1 (Garitano pen 47) Att: 18,000

Rayo Vallecano 0
Alaves 1 (Tellez 70) Att: 8,000

Real Sociedad 1 (Jankauskas 22)
Espanyol 0 Att: 30,000

Sevilla 0
Valladolid 1 (Marquez 55) Att: 40,000

Saturday, March 11

Athletic Bilbao 0
Barcelona 4 (Cocu 9, 75, Kluivert 30, Figo 89) Att: 39,000

Betis Sevilla 1 (Finidi 42)
Rayo Vallecano 1 (Michel I 75) Att: 30,000

Real Madrid 3 (Raul 15, Guti 29, Morientes 33)
Sevilla 1 (Juan Carlos 90) Att: 45,000

Sunday, March 12

Alaves 2 (Javi Moreno 77, 87)
Real Sociedad 1 (Khokhlov 26) Att: 19,000

Espanyol 3 (Tamudo 48, 58, Roger pen 66)
Celta Vigo 0 Att: 26,600

La Coruna 2 (Fran 23, Flavio Conceicao 50)
Valencia 0 Att: 30,000

Malaga 0
Mallorca 0 Att: 28,000

Numancia 1 (Delgado 82)
Oviedo 1 (Dely Valdes 4) Att: 9,500

Racing Santander 1 (Munitis 15)
Zaragoza 2 (Yordi 81, 90) Att: 15,000

Valladolid 1 (Javi Jimenez 25)
Atletico Madrid 0 Att: 14,000

Saturday, March 18

Atletico Madrid 1 (Solari 47)
Real Madrid 1 (Morientes 34) Att: 55,000

Barcelona 2 (Kluivert 24, Rivaldo 32)
La Coruna 1 (Flavio Conceicao 46) Att: 95,000

Valencia 2 (Angulo 51, 66)
Malaga 2 (Catanha 61, pen 90) Att: 35,000

Sunday, March 19

Celta Vigo 1 (McCarthy 57)
Alaves 1 (Javi Moreno 66) Att: 22,000

Mallorca 1 (Diego Tristan 86)
Racing Santander 2 (Manjarin 24, Munitis 82) Att: 14,000

Oviedo 1 (Bango 27)
Athletic Bilbao 0 Att: 13,000

Rayo Vallecano 4 (Amaya 22, Canabal 46, 71, Pena og 85)
Valladolid 1 (Javi Jimenez 87) Att: 11,500

Real Sociedad 1 (Jankauskas 53)
Betis Sevilla 0 Att: 30,000

Sevilla 4 (Zalayeta 36, Juric 72, Jesuli 74, Quevedo 83)
Numancia 0 Att: 9,000

Zaragoza 1 (Juanele 8)
Espanyol 1 (Arteaga 54) Att: 22,000

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
La Coruna	29	16	4	9	49	35	52
Barcelona	29	15	5	9	58	35	50
Alaves	29	14	7	8	35	29	49
Zaragoza	29	12	12	5	48	31	48
Real Madrid	29	12	12	5	49	41	48
Valencia	29	11	9	9	39	31	42
Celta Vigo	29	13	3	13	39	37	42
Malaga	29	9	11	9	41	38	38
Mallorca	29	10	8	11	36	37	38
Rayo Vallecano	29	11	5	13	40	43	38
Valladolid	29	10	8	11	27	35	38
Athletic Bilbao	29	9	10	10	37	46	37
Espanyol	29	9	9	11	44	40	36
Racing Santander	29	9	9	11	42	41	36
Real Sociedad	29	8	11	10	31	36	35
Numancia	29	9	8	12	36	50	35
Betis Sevilla	29	9	7	13	26	42	34
Oviedo	29	8	9	12	29	43	33
Atletico Madrid	29	8	8	13	39	44	32
Sevilla	29	5	11	13	34	45	26

LEADING GOALSCORERS
21 Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink (Atletico Madrid)
21 Salva (Racing Santander)
19 Savo Milosevic (Zaragoza)
18 Catanha (Malaga)
15 Diego Tristan (Mallorca)
14 Raul (Real Madrid)
13 Roy Makaay (La Coruna)
12 Fernando Morientes (Real Madrid)
12 Rivaldo (Barcelona)
11 Victor (Valladolid)

SWITZERLAND

CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFFS

Mar 10: Grasshopper 4 St Gallen 4.
Mar 11: Servette 2 Yverdon 0.
Mar 12: Lausanne 0 Basle 0; Lucerne 1 Neuchatel Xamax 2.
Mar 17: St Gallen 1 Lausanne 0.
Mar 18: Neuchatel Xamax 2 Servette 2.
Mar 19: Basle 2 Grasshopper 2; Yverdon 2 Lucerne 3.

SWITZERLAND – PLAY-OFFS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
St Gallen	2	1	1	0	5	4	27 [23]
Basle	2	0	2	0	2	2	21 [19]
Grasshopper	2	0	2	0	6	6	19 [17]
Lausanne	2	0	1	1	0	1	19 [18]
Servette	2	1	1	0	4	2	18 [14]
Neuchatel Xamax	2	1	1	0	4	3	18 [14]
Lucerne	2	1	0	1	4	4	17 [14]
Yverdon	2	0	0	2	2	5	15 [15]

Teams carried forward half the points won during the first stage (figure in brackets)

TURKEY

Feb 25: Galatasaray 3 Samsunspor 1.
Feb 26: Kocaelispor 1 Besiktas 2; Trabzonspor 2 Goztepe 0; Ankaragucu 2 Bursaspor 1; Adanaspor 1 Antalyaspor 2.
Feb 27: Altay 0 Genclerbirligi 2; Vanspor 2 Denizlispor 3; Istanbulspor 1 Erzurum 1; Gaziantepspor 5 Fenerbahce 1.
Mar 3: Besiktas 3 Altay 0.
Mar 4: Genclerbirligi 1 Istanbulspor 1; Kocaelispor 1 Denizlispor 0; Erzurum 1 Gaziantepspor 1; Fenerbahce 2 Trabzonspor 1.
Mar 5: Samsunspor 5 Vanspor 1; Goztepe 2 Ankaragucu 0; Antalyaspor 1 Galatasaray 3; Bursaspor 3 Adanaspor 1.
Mar 10: Trabzonspor 2 Erzurum 0.
Mar 11: Gaziantepspor 2 Genclerbirligi 1; Altay 1 Denizlispor 0; Kocaelispor 6 Vanspor 1; Ankaragucu 1 Fenerbahce 1.
Mar 12: Adanaspor 2 Goztepe 0; Istanbulspor 0 Besiktas 2; Antalyaspor 0 Samsunspor 1; Galatasaray 6 Bursaspor 0.
Mar 17: Fenerbahce 2 Adanaspor 4.
Mar 18: Erzurum 2 Ankaragucu 1; Besiktas 1 Gaziantepspor 0; Bursaspor 4 Antalyaspor 2; Kocaelispor 0 Samsunspor 4.
Mar 19: Denizlispor 3 Istanbulspor 1; Vanspor 1 Altay 1; Genclerbirligi 0 Trabzonspor 1; Goztepe 0 Galatasaray 2.

TURKEY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Galatasaray	25	21	3	1	59	16	66
Besiktas	25	17	4	4	49	14	55
Fenerbahce	25	11	10	4	42	33	43
Gaziantepspor	25	11	9	5	34	19	42
Trabzonspor	25	11	7	7	33	24	40
Samsunspor	25	12	3	10	40	31	39
Denizlispor	25	10	6	9	40	42	36
Genclerbirligi	25	9	7	9	32	34	34
Altay	25	9	6	10	29	30	33
Adanaspor	25	9	5	11	36	40	32
Antalyaspor	25	8	6	11	29	42	30
Bursaspor	25	8	5	12	35	42	29
Ankaragucu	25	7	7	11	32	41	28
Erzurum	25	7	7	11	27	40	28
Kocaelispor	25	7	5	13	33	45	26
Istanbulspor	25	5	10	10	25	33	25
Goztepe	25	5	5	15	17	36	20
Vanspor	25	3	5	17	27	57	14

UKRAINE

Mar 18: Dynamo 3 CSKA 1; Nyva 2 Metalist 1; Metalurh M 1 Karpaty 0; Prykarpattya 1 Chornomorets 0; Shakhtar 2 Metalurh D 0; Metalurh Z 2 Zirka 0; Vorskla 4 Tavriya 0; Kryvbas 2 Dnipro 2.

UKRAINE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dynamo	16	14	2	0	40	7	44
Kryvbas	16	9	5	2	28	16	32
Vorskla	16	9	3	4	35	18	30
Shakhtar	16	9	2	5	22	9	29
Metalurh Z	16	7	5	4	21	16	26
Karpaty	16	8	0	8	27	22	24
Metalist	16	7	3	6	22	21	24
Metalurh M	16	7	1	8	27	24	22
Metalurh D	16	5	5	6	20	20	20
CSKA	16	4	6	6	18	19	18
Dnipro	16	4	5	7	15	31	17
Tavriya	16	4	4	8	19	28	16
Prykarpattya	16	3	6	7	12	23	15
Chornomorets	16	4	3	9	8	27	15
Nyva	16	3	5	8	22	33	14
Zirka	16	0	7	9	8	30	7

YUGOSLAVIA

Feb 26: Red Star 1 Zemun 1; Borac 2 Buducnost 1; Milicionar 0 Rad 3; Sartid 1 OFK 0; Mogren 2 Radnicki K 1; Obilic 2 Spartak 0; Hajduk K 1 Radnicki N 0; Vojvodina 1 Sutjeska 1; Proleter 0 Partizan 2; Hajduk B 1 Cukaricki 0.
Mar 1: Cukaricki 2 Proleter 0; Partizan 4 Vojvodina 1; Sutjeska 1 Hajduk K 0; Radnicki N 2 Obilic 1; Spartak 3 Mogren 0; Radnicki K 1 Sartid 0; OFK 2 Milicionar 1; Rad 3 Borac 0; Buducnost 0 Red Star 2; Zemun 1 Zeleznik 1.
Mar 4: Zeleznik 1 Buducnost 0; Red Star 1 Rad 0; Borac 0 OFK 2; Milicionar 1 Radnicki K 0; Sartid 2 Spartak 0; Mogren 2 Radnicki N 0; Sutjeska 1 Obilic 2; Hajduk K 0 Partizan 5; Vojvodina 2 Cukaricki 0; Proleter 2 Hajduk B 0.
Mar 11: Buducnost 1 Zemun 0; Hajduk B 2 Vojvodina 2; Cukaricki 0 Hajduk K 0; Partizan 0 Obilic 1; Sutjeska 2 Mogren 0; Radnicki N 2 Sartid 1; Spartak 3 Milicionar 2; Radnicki K 1 Borac 1; Rad 1 Zeleznik 0; OFK 1 Red Star 2.
Mar 15: Red Star 1 Radnicki K 0; Borac 1 Spartak 0; Zemun 2 Rad 1; Sartid 0 Sutjeska 0; Obilic 0 Cukaricki 1; Zeleznik 4 OFK 3; Hajduk K 3 Hajduk B 1; Milicionar 0 Radnicki N 0; Vojvodina 2 Proleter 1; Mogren 0 Partizan 7.
Mar 18: Proleter 1 Hajduk K 0; Hajduk B 0 Obilic 3; Cukaricki 1 Mogren 0; Partizan 4 Sartid 0; Sutjeska 2 Milicionar 0; Radnicki N 4 Borac 1; Spartak 0 Red Star 2; Radnicki K 0 Zeleznik 0; OFK 1 Zemun 1; Rad 1 Buducnost 0.
Mar 22: Red Star 1 Radnicki N 0; Milicionar 0 Partizan 1; Obilic 3 Proleter 1; Hajduk K 1 Vojvodina 1; Borac 0 Sutjeska 2; Zeleznik 3 Spartak 0; Sartid 1 Cukaricki 1; Zemun 2 Radnicki K 0; Buducnost 3 OFK 1; Mogren 3 Hajduk B 0.

YUGOSLAVIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Partizan	29	24	3	2	78	19	75
Obilic	30	23	4	3	56	21	73
Red Star	29	22	6	1	62	16	72
Sutjeska	30	13	7	10	40	39	46
Rad	29	13	6	10	44	33	45
Zeleznik	29	11	8	10	38	33	41
OFK	30	11	8	11	46	47	41
Radnicki N	30	12	4	14	36	38	40
Buducnost	28	12	3	13	34	32	39
Milicionar	30	11	6	13	41	41	39
Vojvodina	29	11	5	13	43	41	38
Zemun	29	10	8	11	36	41	38
Radnicki K	30	10	8	12	25	33	38
Cukaricki	28	10	7	11	26	30	37
Hajduk K	30	9	7	14	25	33	34
Proleter	29	8	9	12	26	35	33
Sartid	30	8	7	15	26	37	31
Mogren	30	9	4	17	28	57	31
Hajduk B	29	9	3	17	39	58	30
Spartak	30	6	5	19	22	55	23
Borac	30	6	4	20	33	65	22

SOUTH AMERICA

LIBERTADORES CUP

Group 1

Feb 16
Alianza Lima (Per) 0
Atletico Paranaense (Bra) 3 (Luisinho 16, 43, 61)

Feb 23
Emelec (Ecu) 0
Nacional (Uru) 2 (Regueito 57, Varela 90)

Feb 29
Alianza Lima 2 (Villaneuva 33, H Sanchez 40)
Emelec 1 (Cuero 67)

Mar 8
Nacional 2 (A Lembo 53, R Da Silva 67)
Alianza Lima 0

Mar 9
Atletico Paranaense 1 (Cleber)
Emelec 0

GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nacional	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
At Paranaense	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
Alianza Lima	3	1	0	2	2	6	3
Emelec	3	0	0	3	1	5	0

Group 2

Feb 22
Universidad Catolica (Chl) 1 (Franco 67)
Penarol (Uru) 1 (F Fernandez 17)

Feb 23
Blooming (Bol) 1 (Antelo)
Boca Juniors (Arg) 0

Mar 2
Boca Juniors 2 (Barijho 35, Guillermo Barros Schelotto pen 66)
Universidad Catolica 1 (Nunez 75)

Penarol 2 (Franco 2, Cedres pen 21)
Blooming 1 (L Gutierrez 18)

Mar 9
Blooming 3 (L Gutierrez 9, Justiniano 49, Paredes 82)
Universidad Catolica 1 (Carracedo 78)

GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Blooming	3	2	0	1	5	3	6
Penarol	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
Boca Juniors	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
U Catolica	3	0	1	2	3	6	1

Group 3

Feb 16
America (Mex) 2 (Sanchez 37, 71)
Corinthians (Bra) 0

Feb 23
LDU (Ecu) 0
Olimpia (Par) 1 (Quintana 84)

Mar 1
Olimpia 3 (Monzon 9, Baez 19, G Gonzalez 82)
America 1 (Calderon 40)

Mar 3
Corinthians 6 (Marcelinho Carioca pen 12, Luizao 21, 49, 70, Capurro og 51, Dinel 72)
LDU 0

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olimpia	2	2	0	0	4	1	6
Corinthians	2	1	0	1	6	2	3
America	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
LDU	2	0	0	2	0	7	0

Group 4

Feb 23
Atlas (Mex) 1 (Castillo 23)
River Plate (Arg) 1 (Angel 29)

Universidad de Chile 4 (Rojas 25, P Gonzalez 36, Tello 87, Acuna 89)
Atletico Nacional (Col) 0

Feb 29
Atletico Nacional 2 (Moreno 28, 44)
Atlas 3 (Zepeda 42, 65, Santillan 71)

River Plate 3 (Aimar 17, 36, Angel 58)
Universidad de Chile 1 (Acuna 85)

Mar 8
Atletico Nacional 1 (Morantes pen 53)
River Plate 1 (Angel 34)

Mar 9
Atlas 0
Universidad de Chile 0

GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
River Plate	3	1	2	0	5	3	5
Atlas	3	1	2	0	4	3	5
U de Chile	3	1	1	1	5	3	4
At Nacional	3	0	1	2	3	8	1

Group 5

Feb 17
Cerro Porteno (Par) 1 (Espinola 10)
Atletico Junior (Col) 0

San Lorenzo (Arg) 3 (A Lopez 39, Franco 62, Tuzzio pen 74)
Universitario (Per) 0

Mar 2
Atletico Junior 3 (Ballesteros 3, Arriaga 9, Restrepo 83)
San Lorenzo 1 (Coria 65)

Universitario 1 (Grondona 53)
Cerro Porteno 0

Mar 7
San Lorenzo 2 (Romeo 12, Pusineri 74)
Cerro Porteno 2 (Struway 69, Sara 87)

Mar 10
Atletico Junior 1 (F Mosquera 31)
Universitario 0

GROUP 5

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
At Junior	3	2	0	1	4	2	6
San Lorenzo	3	1	1	1	6	5	4
Cerro Porteno	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Universitario	3	1	0	2	1	4	3

Group 6

Feb 22
Colegiales (Par) 2 (Matto 31, Saucedo 33)
America (Col) 5 (Monges og 18, Moreno 40, 67, Salazar 60, 74)

Rosario Central (Arg) 3 (Pizzi 45, Maceratesi 47, E Gonzalez 64)
Sporting Cristal (Per) 1 (Juarez 74)

Mar 7
Sporting Cristal 3 (Holsen 45, Juarez 57, Olcese 65)
Colegiales 0

Mar 8
America 5 (Moreno 44, 45, 90, Salazar 46, Oviedo 68)
Rosario Central 3 (Canals pen 6, Latorre 27, 77)

GROUP 6

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
America	2	2	0	0	10	5	6
Sporting Cristal	2	1	0	1	4	3	3
Rosario Central	2	1	0	1	6	6	3
Colegiales	2	0	0	2	2	8	0

Group 7

Feb 15
Palmeiras (Bra) 4 (Roque Junior 6, Galeano 39, Basilio 62, Pena 85)
The Strongest (Bol) 0

Feb 16
Juventude (Bra) 1 (Mabilia 46)
El Nacional (Ecu) 0

Mar 8
The Strongest 5 (O Sanchez 8, Adilson og 32, Rojas 37, Vidal Gonzalez 67, J B Suarez 90)
Juventude 1 (Marcao 45)

GROUP 7

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Palmeiras	1	1	0	0	4	0	3
The Strongest	2	1	0	1	5	5	3
Juventude	2	1	0	1	2	5	3
El Nacional	1	0	0	1	0	1	0

Group 8

Feb 17
Atletico Mineiro (Bra) 1 (Ramon 28)
Bolivar (Bol) 0

Feb 24
Bella Vista Montevideo (Uru) 1 (Emanuelle 87)
Cobreloa (Chl) 1 (Vivar 69)

Mar 1
Bolivar 1 (Fleita 86)
Bella Vista Montevideo 0

Mar 9
Cobreloa 1 (R Vallejos 4)
Atletico Mineiro 0

GROUP 8

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cobreloa	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
At Mineiro	2	1	0	1	1	1	3
Bolivar	2	1	0	1	1	1	3
Bella Vista M	2	0	1	1	1	2	1

Top two from each group qualify for second round

ARGENTINA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Friday, February 18

Lanus 1 (Kmet 22)
Independiente 2 (Graf 16, 74)

River Plate 1 (Angel 43)
Rosario Central 1 (J Garcia 57)

Saturday, February 19

Union Santa Fe 0
San Lorenzo 1 (A Lopez 88)

Sunday, February 20

Argentinos Juniors 0
Belgrano Cordoba 2 (Carnero 68, Medina 76)

Gimnasia J 0
Colon Santa Fe 2 (Enria 24, Fuertes 69)

Gimnasia LP 2 (Sanguinetti 35, Sanchez 79)
Ferro Carril Oeste 0

Racing Club 1 (Estevez 36)
Boca Juniors 1 (Guillermo Barros Schelotto pen 77)

Talleres Cordoba 1 (Gigena 55)
Chacarita Juniors 0

Velez Sarsfield 3 (D Husain 17, Baratteri og 27, Bardaro 36)
Estudiantes 0

Monday, February 21

Newell's Old Boys 4 (Real 10, 21, 90, Manso 11)
Instituto Cordoba 0

Friday, February 25

Independiente 8 (Milito 29, D Montenegro 37, 42, Marioni 44, 61, A Montenegro 65, Arca og 68, Forlan 86)
Argentinos Juniors 1 (Schiavi pen 88)

Saturday, February 26

Belgrano Cordoba 2 (Torres 55, Medina pen 77)
Velez Sarsfield 3 (Chilavert 11, Camps 27, Morigi 75)

Sunday, February 27

Boca Juniors 1 (Moreno 27)
Lanus 1 (M Vilallonga 37)

Chacarita Juniors 1 (Rivero 63)
Racing Club 1 (Peralta 77)

Colon Santa Fe 1 (J Delgado 10)
River Plate 4 (Cardetti 1, 13, Angel 85, D Alvarez 90)

Ferro Carril Oeste 0
Talleres Cordoba 3 (Marzo 61, pen 85, Maidana 69)

Instituto Cordoba 1 (Jimenez 60)
Union Santa Fe 1 (Tilger 62)

Rosario Central 1 (Pizzi 38)
Newell's Old Boys 1 (Fuentes 80)

San Lorenzo 1 (A Lopez 10)
Gimnasia LP 1 (Messera 80)

Monday, February 28

Estudiantes 5 (Piersimone 7, 80, 90, Farias 27, 63)
Gimnasia J 1 (Brown og 30)

Friday, March 3

Racing Club 0
Ferro Carril Oeste 2 (Hernandez 68, Ascencio 84)

Union Santa Fe 0
Rosario Central 0

Saturday, March 4

Velez Sarsfield 0
Independiente 0

Sunday, March 5

Chacarita Juniors 0
Boca Juniors 4 (Samuel 9, Moreno 14, 35, 53)

Gimnasia J 1 (Romano 76)
Belgrano Cordoba 1 (Medina 8)

Gimnasia LP 1 (Sava 82)
Instituto Cordoba 0

Newell's Old Boys 3 (Guinazu 47, Real 49, Mateo 51)
Colon Santa Fe 3 (J Delgado 13, Biaggio 77, Castagno Suarez 87)

River Plate 2 (Saviola 62, D Alvarez 88)
Estudiantes 2 (Brown pen 20, Farias 56)

Talleres Cordoba 1 (Gigena 17)
San Lorenzo 2 (Romeo 68, 76)

Monday, March 6

Argentinos Juniors 0
Lanus 1 (Klimowicz 15)

Friday March 10

Independiente 4 (A Montenegro 2, Marioni 46, 51, Graf 84)
Gimnasia J 2 (Bisconti 32, A Gonzalez 52)

Saturday, March 11

Belgrano Cordoba 0
River Plate 1 (Cardetti 52)

Sunday, March 12

Boca Juniors 1 (Moreno 26)
Argentinos Juniors 0

Colon Santa Fe 4 (Fuertes pen 2, Enria 13, J Delgado 40, 76)
Union Santa Fe 0

Estudiantes 1 (Farias 30)
Newell's Old Boys 3 (Quintana 1, 55, Manso 14)

Instituto Cordoba 2 (Jimenez 43, Sarria 51)
Talleres Cordoba 0

Rosario Central 4 (Cuberas 45, Pizzi 57, Maceratesi 73, E Gonzalez 77)
Gimnasia LP 2 (Sava 27, San Esteban pen 80)

San Lorenzo 1 (Franco 16)
Racing Club 0

Monday, March 13

Ferro Carril Oeste 1 (Chaparro 83)
Chacarita Juniors 0

Friday, March 17

Racing Club 1 (Cordone 27)
Instituto Cordoba 2 (Bujan 53, Amato 84)

Saturday, March 18

Velez Sarsfield 3 (De la Vega og 49, Morigi 62, Camps 66)
Argentinos Juniors 3 (Schiavi 39, 87, Sandoval 43)

Sunday, March 19

Chacarita Juniors 0
San Lorenzo 0

Ferro Carril Oeste 0
Boca Juniors 4 (Riquelme 3, Moreno 36, Marchant 53, Groothuis og 86)

Gimnasia J 1 (Bisconti 1)
Lanus 1 (Da Silva 85)

Gimnasia LP 6 (Sava 14, 45, 58, 74, Sanchez 46, San Esteban pen 90)
Colon Santa Fe 6 (Fuertes pen 5, 22, 85, Valencia 33, Cufre og 38, Morant 55)

Newell's Old Boys 0
Belgrano Cordoba 1 (Carnero 65)

River Plate 2 (Trotta pen 10, Saviola 53)
Independiente 0

Talleres Cordoba 3 (Silva 37, Roth 61, Escobar 90)
Rosario Central 1 (Pizzi pen 8)

Monday, March 20

Union Santa Fe 2 (Saenz 42, Tilger 89)
Estudiantes 1 (Casartelli 71)

ARGENTINA – CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Boca Juniors	6	4	2	0	14	3	14
River Plate	6	4	2	0	12	5	14
San Lorenzo	6	4	2	0	6	2	14
Colon Santa Fe	6	3	2	1	17	13	11
Gimnasia LP	6	3	2	1	14	12	11
Independiente	6	3	1	2	15	9	10
Rosario Central	6	2	3	1	9	7	9
Talleres Cordoba	6	3	0	3	9	8	9
Newell's Old Boys	6	2	2	2	11	7	8
Velez Sarsfield	5	2	2	1	9	6	8
Lanus	5	2	2	1	8	6	8
Union Santa Fe	6	2	2	2	6	9	8
Belgrano Cordoba	6	2	1	3	8	9	7
Instituto Cordoba	6	2	1	3	6	9	7
Ferro Carril Oeste	6	2	0	4	5	12	6
Estudiantes	6	1	2	3	10	12	5
Racing Club	6	1	2	3	6	8	5
Chacarita Juniors	6	0	2	4	2	9	2
Gimnasia J	6	0	2	4	5	15	2
Argentinos Juniors	6	0	2	4	5	16	2

LEADING GOALSCORERS

6	Esteban Fuertes (Colon Santa Fe)
6	Alfredo Moreno (Boca Juniors)
6	Facundo Sava (Gimnasia LP)
4	Damian Alvarez (River Plate)
4	Javier Delgado (Colon Santa Fe)
4	Ernesto Farias (Estudiantes)
4	Bruno Marioni (Independiente)
4	German Real (Newell's Old Boys)
4	Rolando Schiavi (Argentinos Juniors)

BOLIVIA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Feb 24: Bolivar 2 Guabira 1; Independiente 2 The Strongest 2; Jorge Wilstermann 2 Oriente 0.
Feb 26: Santa Cruz 5 Mariscal Braun 1.
Feb 27: Atletico Pompeya 4 Real Potosi 1; Blooming 2 Independiente 0; Bolivar 1 The Strongest 1; Guabira 2 Oriente 2; Union Central 1 Jorge Wilstermann 1.
Mar 11: Mariscal Braun 4 Guabira 1.
Mar 12: Jorge Wilstermann 3 Santa Cruz 0; Oriente 4 Bolivar 1; The Strongest 8 Atletico Pompeya 0; Real Potosi 5 Blooming 0; Independiente 4 Union Central 3.

BOLIVIA – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Blooming	6	5	0	1	11	7	15
The Strongest	6	4	2	0	18	4	14
Independiente	6	4	1	1	17	9	13
Real Potosi	6	4	0	2	15	11	12
J Wilstermann	6	3	1	2	10	6	10
Oriente	6	2	3	1	12	8	9
Bolivar	6	2	1	3	9	13	7
Atletico Pompeya	6	2	1	3	8	15	7
Santa Cruz	6	1	1	4	6	12	4
Mariscal Braun	6	1	1	4	9	17	4
Guabira	6	1	1	4	8	16	4
Union Central	6	0	2	4	7	12	2

BRAZIL

RIO-SAO PAULO TOURNAMENT

GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sao Paulo	6	4	0	2	13	12	12
Botafogo RJ	6	3	1	2	11	8	10
Flamengo	6	2	2	2	14	10	8
Santos	6	1	1	4	6	14	4

GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Palmeiras	6	4	1	1	17	9	13
Vasco da Gama	6	3	2	1	9	7	11
Corinthians	6	2	1	3	5	7	7
Fluminense	6	1	0	5	4	12	3

Semi-finals

1st legs
Feb 19: Botafogo 0 Palmeiras 0; Sao Paulo 0 Vasco da Gama 3.

2nd legs
Feb 23: Palmeiras 3 Botafogo 1
Palmeiras 3-1 on agg.
Vasco da Gama 2 Sao Paulo 1
Vasco da Gama 5-1 on agg.

Final

1st leg
Feb 26: Vasco da Gama 1 Palmeiras 2.

2nd leg
Mar 2: Palmeiras 4 Vasco da Gama 0
Palmeiras 6-1 on agg.

RIO (CARIOCA) STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

First stage

Mar 11: Flamengo 5 America 0.
Mar 12: Vasco da Gama 2 Madureira 0; Fluminense 0 Cabofriense 0; Bangu 0 Botafogo 3; Friburguense 0 Volta Redonda 0; Americano 3 Olaria 0.

RIO STATE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Flamengo	1	1	0	0	5	0	3
Americano	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
Botafogo	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
Vasco da Gama	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Cabofriense	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Fluminense	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Friburguense	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Volta Redonda	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Madureira	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Bangu	1	0	0	1	0	3	0
Olaria	1	0	0	1	0	3	0
America	1	0	0	1	0	5	0

SAO PAULO STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

Second stage

Mar 8: Rio Branco 2 Portuguesa Sant 1; Botafogo 0 Sao Paulo 2; Palmeiras 1 Guarani 1; Corinthians 2 Inter Limeira 0; Ponte Preta 1 Mogi Mirim 0; Matonense 2 Santos 2; Aracatuba 0 Portuguesa 0; Uniao Sao Joao 1 Barbarense 1.
Mar 12: Mogi Mirim 2 Corinthians 5; Barbarense 3 Rio Branco 2; Inter Limeira 4 Aracatuba 1; Portuguesa 2 Matonense 2; Santos 1 Ponte Preta 0; Portuguesa Sant 2 Botafogo 0; Guarani 0 Uniao Sao Joao 2; Sao Paulo 2 Palmeiras 1.

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sao Paulo	2	2	0	0	4	1	6
Barbarense	2	1	1	0	4	3	4
Portuguesa Sant	2	1	0	1	3	2	3
Guarani	2	0	1	1	1	3	1

GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Corinthians	2	2	0	0	7	2	6
Ponte Preta	2	1	0	1	1	1	3
Matonense	2	0	2	0	4	4	2
Aracatuba	2	0	1	1	1	4	1

GROUP 5

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Uniao Sao Joao	2	1	1	0	3	1	4
Rio Branco	2	1	0	1	4	4	3
Palmeiras	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
Botafogo	2	0	0	2	0	4	0

GROUP 6

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Santos	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
Inter Limeira	2	1	0	1	4	3	3
Portuguesa	2	0	2	0	2	2	2
Mogi Mirim	2	0	0	2	2	6	0

Top two from each group qualify for quarter-finals. Groups numbered from 3 to 6 because First Stage groups were numbered 1 and 2

CHILE

PRE-SEASON CUP

Feb 26: Everton 1 Palestino 0; Santiago Morning 1 Santiago Wanderers 0; Provincial Osorno 2 Huachipato 0; Dep Concepcion 2 Union Espanola 2; O'Higgins 0 U de Chile 4.
Feb 27: Audax Italiano 2 U Catolica 3; Colo Colo 5 Puerto Montt 2.
Feb 28: Coquimbo Unido 0 Cobreloa 1.
Mar 4: Palestino 2 Cobreloa 2; Everton 1 Coquimbo Unido 2; Colo Colo 4 Provincial Osorno 0; Dep Concepcion 1 O'Higgins 0.
Mar 5: U Catolica 2 Santiago Wanderers 0; Audax Italiano 2 Santiago Morning 2; Puerto Montt 1 Huachipato 1; Union Espanola 2 U de Chile 2.
Mar 12: O'Higgins 2 Union Espanola 3; Dep Concepcion 0 U de Chile 2; Colo Colo 2 Huachipato 1; Provincial Osorno 6 Puerto Montt 1; Audax Italiano 2 Santiago Wanderers 0; Coquimbo Unido 1 Palestino 0.
Mar 13: Santiago Morning 3 U Catolica 0.

GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
U de Chile	4	2	2	0	8	2	8
Union Espanola	4	2	2	0	12	7	8
Dep Concepcion	4	1	2	1	3	4	5
O'Higgins	4	0	0	4	4	13	0

GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
U Catolica	4	3	0	1	6	5	9
Audax Italiano	4	2	1	1	9	5	7
Santiago Morning	4	2	1	1	6	3	7
Santiago Wanderers	4	0	0	4	0	8	0

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Colo Colo	4	3	1	0	11	3	10
Provincial Osorno	4	2	0	2	8	6	6
Puerto Montt	4	1	1	2	5	12	4
Huachipato	4	0	2	2	2	5	2

GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Everton	3	2	0	1	4	3	6
Coquimbo Unido	4	2	0	2	3	3	6
Cobreloa	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Palestino	4	1	1	2	3	4	4

COLOMBIA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Feb 12: Envigado 0 Dep Cali 0.
Feb 13: At Junior 5 Tulua 1; Bucaramanga 1 Millonarios 1; At Huila 0 At Nacional 0; Indep Medellin 1 Real Cartagena 0.
Feb 16: America 6 Once Caldas 1.
Feb 19: At Nacional 3 America 1.
Feb 20: Once Caldas 2 At Junior 2; Dep Pasto 2 Envigado 1; Tulua 1 Bucaramanga 1; Dep Cali 1 Indep Santa Fe 0; Real Cartagena 2 Quindio 0.
Feb 23: Quindio 2 Dep Pasto 1.
Feb 26: America 2 Millonarios 1.
Feb 27: Tulua 3 Once Caldas 0; At Junior 0 At Nacional 0; Bucaramanga 0 At Huila 0; Indep Santa Fe 2 Dep Pasto 0; Envigado 2 Real Cartagena 0; Indep Medellin 1 Quindio 0.
Mar 5: Once Caldas 3 Bucaramanga 2; At Nacional 2 Tulua 1; Millonarios 3 At Junior 2; At Huila 1 America 1; Dep Cali 3 Indep Medellin 1; Dep Pasto 0 Tolima 1; Real Cartagena 3 Indep Santa Fe 2; Quindio 1 Envigado 1.
Mar 9: Indep Santa Fe 2 Tolima 5.
Mar 12: At Junior 2 At Huila 0; Tolima 1 Real Cartagena 0; Bucaramanga 2 America 0; Indep Medellin 2 Envigado 2; Dep Cali 4 Dep Pasto 0; Indep Santa Fe 1 Quindio 1; Tulua 1 Millonarios 0; Once Caldas 2 At Nacional 1.
Mar 15: Millonarios 3 At Huila 1.

COLOMBIA – OPENING: GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
At Junior	5	2	2	1	11	6	8
At Nacional	5	2	2	1	6	4	8
America	5	2	1	2	10	8	7
Millonarios	5	2	1	2	8	7	7
Tulua	5	2	1	2	7	8	7
Once Caldas	5	2	1	2	8	14	7
Bucaramanga	5	1	3	1	6	5	6
At Huila	5	0	3	2	2	6	3

COLOMBIA – OPENING: GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dep Cali	4	3	1	0	8	1	10
Tolima	3	3	0	0	7	2	9
Indep Medellin	4	2	1	1	5	5	7
Envigado	5	1	3	1	6	5	6
Real Cartagena	5	2	0	3	5	6	6
Quindio	5	1	2	2	4	6	5
Indep Santa Fe	5	1	1	3	7	10	4
Dep Pasto	5	1	0	4	3	10	3

ECUADOR

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Feb 26: Emelec 3 Aucas 0.
Feb 27: LDU 2 Macara 2; Dep Quito 1 Espoli 2; Tecnico Univ 2 El Nacional 2; Olmedo 1 Barcelona 0.
Mar 4: Macara 1 Olmedo 1.
Mar 5: Barcelona 3 Tecnico Univ 1; Espoli 1 Emelec 0; El Nacional 0 Dep Quito 0.
Mar 7: Aucas 0 LDU 1.
Mar 12: Dep Quito 1 Barcelona 1; Espoli 2 El Nacional 2; Emelec 2 LDU 0; Tecnico Univ 0 Macara 0; Olmedo 0 Aucas 1.

ECUADOR – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Emelec	5	3	1	1	8	3	10
Espoli	5	3	1	1	8	6	10
Aucas	5	3	0	2	4	5	9
LDU	5	2	2	1	7	5	8
Olmedo	5	2	1	2	4	3	7
El Nacional	5	1	3	1	6	8	6
Barcelona	5	1	2	2	4	4	5
Dep Quito	5	0	4	1	5	6	4
Macara	5	0	3	2	5	7	3
Tecnico Univ	5	0	3	2	6	10	3

PARAGUAY

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Feb 27: Colegiales 4 Sol de America 1; San Lorenzo 1 Guarani 0; 12 de Octubre 2 Cerro Cora 1; Cerro Porteno 0 Sportivo Luqueno 0; Universal 1 Olimpia 1.
Mar 5: Colegiales 3 Universal 2; Sportivo Luqueno 0 San Lorenzo 2; Cerro Porteno 2 12 de Octubre 1; Guarani 2 Sol de America 2; Olimpia 3 Cerro Cora 1.
Mar 12: 12 de Octubre 0 Olimpia 1; Cerro Cora 2 Colegiales 0; Universal 2 Guarani 5; San Lorenzo 1 Cerro Porteno 1; Sol de America 3 Sportivo Luqueno 1.

PARAGUAY – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olimpia	3	2	1	0	5	2	7
San Lorenzo	3	2	1	0	3	1	7
Colegiales	3	2	0	1	7	5	6
Cerro Porteno	3	1	2	0	3	2	5
Guarani	3	1	1	1	7	5	4
Sol de America	3	1	1	1	6	7	4
Cerro Cora	3	1	0	2	4	5	3
12 de Octubre	3	1	0	2	3	4	3
Universal	3	0	1	2	5	9	1
Sportivo Luqueno	3	0	1	2	1	5	1

PERU

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Feb 26: Dep Municipal 1 Melgar 4; Sport Boys 4 Alianza Lima 0.
Feb 27: Alianza Atletico 3 Dep UPAO 1; Sporting Cristal 1 Juan Aurich 1; Universitario 2 Cienciano 1; Dep Pesquero 1 Union Minas 1.
Mar 4: Dep UPAO 1 Sporting Cristal 0.
Mar 5: Alianza Lima 0 Universitario 2; Dep Municipal 1 Juan Aurich 1; Sport Boys 3 Dep Pesquero 1; Union Minas 4 Melgar 2; Cienciano 2 Alianza Atletico 1.
Mar 11: Melgar 3 Sporting Cristal 1.
Mar 12: Universitario 2 Dep UPAO 1; Juan Aurich 2 Alianza Lima 2; Alianza Atletico 2 Union Minas 1; Cienciano 1 Sport Boys 1; Dep Pesquero 1 Dep Municipal 0.

PERU – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Universitario	6	4	2	0	11	6	14
Sport Boys	6	3	2	1	11	6	11
Cienciano	6	3	2	1	6	4	11
Melgar	6	3	1	2	14	9	10
Union Minas	6	3	1	2	9	7	10
Juan Aurich	6	1	5	0	8	7	8
Dep Pesquero	6	2	2	2	6	9	8
Alianza Atletico	6	2	1	3	9	10	7
Sporting Cristal	6	2	1	3	7	8	7
Alianza Lima	6	1	3	2	6	10	6
Dep UPAO	6	1	1	4	4	8	4
Dep Municipal	6	0	1	5	3	10	1

URUGUAY

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Feb 25: River Plate 3 Defensor 2.
Feb 26: Penarol 4 Rocha 3.
Feb 27: Rentistas 0 Nacional 0; Tacuarembo 1 Danubio 1; Huracan Buceo 3 Frontera Rivera 1; Dep Maldonado 2 Liverpool 5; Villa Espanola 1 Bella Vista M 1; Cerro 2 Racing 1; Juventud 1 Bella Vista P 0.
Mar 3: Huracan Buceo 0 Rentistas 1.
Mar 4: Nacional 3 Liverpool 0.
Mar 5: Danubio 1 Penarol 2; Villa Espanola 2 River Plate 1; Racing 1 Juventud 1; Frontera Rivera 4 Tacuarembo 1; Bella Vista M 3 Dep Maldonado 0; Defensor 1 Bella Vista P 2; Rocha 3 Cerro 1.
Mar 10: Rocha 1 Bella Vista M 3.
Mar 11: Liverpool 1 Penarol 2.
Mar 12: Cerro 1 Dep Maldonado 3; Danubio 1 Nacional 2; Tacuarembo 0 Rentistas 0; Racing 2 Huracan Buceo 2; Bella Vista P 0 Villa Espanola 2; Frontera Rivera 1 River Plate 4; Defensor 0 Juventud 1.

URUGUAY – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bella Vista M	4	3	1	0	8	2	10
Nacional	4	3	1	0	6	1	10
Penarol	4	3	0	1	11	9	9
Rentistas	4	2	2	0	3	1	8
River Plate	4	2	1	1	8	5	7
Villa Espanola	4	2	1	1	6	4	7
Juventud	4	2	1	1	3	2	7
Cerro	4	2	0	2	8	10	6
Huracan Buceo	4	1	2	1	5	4	5
Tacuarembo	4	1	2	1	3	5	5
Danubio	4	1	1	2	5	5	4
Rocha	4	1	1	2	8	9	4
Defensor	4	1	0	3	6	7	3
Racing	4	0	3	1	5	6	3
Liverpool	4	1	0	3	6	8	3
Frontera Rivera	4	1	0	3	7	11	3
Bella Vista P	4	1	0	3	2	6	3
Dep Maldonado	4	1	0	3	5	10	3

VENEZUELA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Feb 16: Zulianos 1 Inter El Vigia 1.
Feb 27: Estudiantes 4 Zulianos 1; Llaneros 1 Carabobo 0; Caracas 1 Mineros Guayana 0; Dep Tachira 1 Nacional 1; Trujillanos 1 Ital-Chacao 2; Inter El Vigia 1 FCU-ULA 2.
Mar 1: Zulianos 0 Dep Tachira 2; Trujillanos 2 Caracas 2; Inter El Vigia 4 Llaneros 3; FCU-ULA 2 Estudiantes 3; Ital-Chacao 0 Carabobo 0; Nacional 1 Mineros Guayana 1.
Mar 5: Llaneros 2 Dep Tachira 2; Carabobo 2 Inter El Vigia 1; Mineros Guayana 1 FCU-ULA 0; Nacional 0 Ital-Chacao 0; Caracas 2 Zulianos 2; Estudiantes 1 Trujillanos 0.
Mar 8: Dep Tachira 3 Inter El Vigia 0.
Mar 12: FCU-ULA 1 Caracas 1; Zulianos 2 Trujillanos 1; Mineros Guayana 0 Carabobo 2; Nacional 1 Estudiantes 1; Ital-Chacao 3 Llaneros 0; Inter El Vigia 1 Dep Tachira 1.

VENEZUELA – CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ital-Chacao	12	8	3	1	23	5	27
Dep Tachira	12	7	4	1	19	7	25
Estudiantes	12	7	3	2	18	12	24
Caracas	12	6	3	3	19	12	21
Carabobo	12	5	3	4	13	11	18
Mineros Guayana	12	4	3	5	12	14	15
FCU-ULA	12	4	2	6	15	14	14
Inter El Vigia	12	4	2	6	18	23	14
Nacional	12	2	5	5	10	16	11
Trujillanos	12	2	4	6	12	16	10
Llaneros	12	2	3	7	9	28	9
Zulianos	12	1	5	6	7	17	8

CENTRAL & NORTH AMERICA

MEXICO

SUMMER CHAMPIONSHIP

Feb 25: Tecos UAG 1 Atletico Morelia 3.
Feb 26: Guadalajara 1 Atlas 3; Toluca 2 America 4; Cruz Azul 3 Puebla 1.
Feb 27: Santos 2 Necaxa 2; Atlante 3 Toros Neza 2; Leon 4 Atletico Celaya 1; Pachuca 2 Pumas UNAM 2.
Mar 1: Cruz Azul 1 Atletico Morelia 1.
Mar 4: Tigres 3 Cruz Azul 2; Atlas 3 Atlante 1; Puebla 0 Pachuca 0; Atletico Celaya 1 Guadalajara 1; Necaxa 1 Leon 1.
Mar 5: Pumas UNAM 2 Tecos UAG 1; Atletico Morelia 0 Santos 0; Toros Neza 0 Toluca 1.
Mar 6: America 1 Monterrey 1.
Mar 10: Tecos UAG 1 Puebla 1.
Mar 11: Toluca 2 Atlas 1; Cruz Azul 2 America 3; Monterrey 0 Toros Neza 3.
Mar 12: Guadalajara 1 Leon 0; Atletico Morelia 0 Necaxa 0; Pachuca 1 Tigres 0; Santos 1 Pumas UNAM 0; Atlante 1 Atletico Celaya 1.
Mar 15: Atlante 0 Tigres 1; Pumas UNAM 1 Cruz Azul 3.

GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Toluca	8	6	0	2	21	13	18
Pumas UNAM	9	2	3	4	12	17	9
Toros Neza	9	3	0	6	14	24	9
Tecos UAG	9	2	1	6	9	16	7
Leon	9	1	3	5	10	14	6

GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Atletico Morelia	9	3	4	2	15	10	13
Puebla	9	3	3	3	14	15	12
Atletico Celaya	9	2	5	2	14	15	11
Monterrey	8	3	2	3	9	16	11
Cruz Azul	9	3	1	5	19	19	10

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Santos	9	5	4	0	15	7	19
America	9	5	2	2	23	15	17
Atlas	9	4	1	4	20	18	13
Atlante	9	1	2	6	8	18	5

GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guadalajara	9	5	3	1	15	7	18
Necaxa	9	4	4	1	17	11	16
Tigres	7	3	2	2	8	4	11
Pachuca	9	2	4	3	9	13	10

LEADING GOALSCORERS

8	Agustin Delgado (Necaxa)
6	Juan Palencia (Cruz Azul)
6	Cuauhtemoc Blanco (America)
6	Everaldo Bejines (Leon)
6	Sebastian Abreu (Tecos UAG)
5	Jared Borguetti (Santos)
5	Jose Cardozo (Toluca)
4	Miguel Zepeda (Atlas)
4	Juan P Rodriguez (Atlas)
4	Omar Gomez (Monterrey)

USA

Mar 18: Tampa Bay Mutiny 5 Columbus Crew 1; Miami Fusion 1 New England Revolution 1; Dallas Burn 4 Chicago Fire 2; LA Galaxy 2 Colorado Rapids 1.

AFRICA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

FIRST ROUND

1st legs
Mar 17: Al Ahly (Egy) 3 Tusker (Ken) 1.
Mar 18: Mouloudia (Alg) 1 Jeanne d'Arc (Sen) 1; Esperance (Tun) 7 APR FC (Rwa) 0; Lobi Stars (Nig) 2 Tempete Mocaf (CAR) 0.
Mar 19: Raja Casablanca (Mor) 3 Dragons l'Oueme (Ben) 1; ASFA (BuF) 2 Djoliba (Mli) 2; Vita Club (Con) 2 Primeiro Agosto (Ang) 1; Hearts of Oak (Gha) 2 Horoya (Gui) 1; Highlanders (Zim) 1 St Michel (Sey) 0; Sable de Batie (Cam) 2 FC 105 (Gab) 1; USST (Reu) 1 Nkana FC (Zam) 2; Mamelodi Sundowns (SAf) 2 Defence Force (Les) 1; Africa Sports (IvC) 4 Al Ahli (Lby) 0; Al Hilal (Sud) 1 Ferroviario Maputo (Moz) 1.
Mar 20: St George (Eth) 1 Vital'O (Brd) 2.

Vacoas (Mrs) were expelled from the first round after fielding a suspended player in a preliminary round game against St Michel (Sey). St Michel replaced Vacoas.

CUP-WINNERS CUP

FIRST ROUND

1st legs

Mar 18: Jeunesse Sportive (Ngr) 1 USM Alger (Alg) 1; AS Dragons (DRC) 3 Stade Malien (Mli) 2; Young Africans (Tan) 1 Zamalek (Egy) 1; Etoile Filante (BuF) 0 Royal Armed Forces (Mor) 0; Mbale Heroes (Uga) 1 Al Merreikh (Sud) 2; Coastal Stars (Ken) 0 Canon Yaounde (Cam) 1; Mogoditshane Life Fighters (Bot) 1 Zamsure (Zam) 2.

Mar 19: Ethiopia Coffee (Eth) 3 Telecom Wanderers (Mwi) 0; Mogas '90 (Ben) 0 Club Africain (Tun) 0; Plateau United (Nig) 3 Etoile du Congo (Con) 2; Rayon Sports (Rwa) 2 USB (Gab) 0; FC Djivan (Mad) 1 St Louisienne (Reu) 1; Al Ittihad (Lby) 2 Accra Great Olympics (Gha) 0; Costa do Sol (Moz) 1 SuperSport United (Saf) 1; Sagrada Esperance (Ang) 4 Agaza Lome (Tog) 1.

CAF CUP

FIRST ROUND

1st legs

Mar 17: Hay Al Arab (Sau) 2 Shabana (Ken) 0.

Mar 18: Ismailia (Egy) 5 Al Mahalla (Lby) 1; Etoile Sahel (Tun) 10 Chingale (Moz) 0; CA Bizerte (Tun) 2 USFA (BuF) 0; Kaizer Chiefs (SAf) 5 Mbabane Highlanders (Swa) 2.

Mar 19: Mtibawa (Tan) 3 Mochudi Centre Chiefs (Bot) 0; Coton de Garoua (Cam) 2 TP Mysteres (Con) 0; Awassa City (Eth) 2 Mukura Victory (Rwa) 0; Iwuanyanwu Nationale (Nig) 3 USM Libreville (Gab) 0; USFAS (Mli) 2 Cape Coast Dwarfs (Gha) 0; Nchanga Rangers (Zam) 1 DSA (Mad) 0.

ASIA

CHAMPIONS CUP

QUARTER-FINALS

EAST ASIA ZONE (in Kagoshima)

Feb 25: Kashima Antlers (Jap) 1 Suwon Bluewings (SKo) 1; Jubilo Iwata (Jap) 2 Sinthana (Tha) 0.

Feb 27: Jubilo Iwata 1 Kashima Antlers 0; Suwon Bluewings 4 Sinthana 0.

Feb 29: Jubilo Iwata 1 Suwon Bluewings 0; Kashima Antlers 3 Sinthana 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Jubilo Iwata	3	3	0	0	4	0	9
Suwon Bluewings	3	1	1	1	5	2	4
Kashima Antlers	3	1	1	1	4	2	4
Sinthana	3	0	0	3	0	9	0

Top two qualified for semi-finals

JAPAN

FIRST STAGE

Mar 11: Kashima Antlers 1 Nagoya Grampus Eight 0; Jubilo Iwata 0 Kashiwa Reysol 1 (aet); JEF United Ichihara 6 Kyoto Purple Sanga 1; Vissel Kobe 1 Sanfrecce Hiroshima 0; Avispa Fukuoka 2 Kawasaki Frontale 1; Shimizu S-Pulse 3 Cerezo Osaka 2; Verdy Kawasaki 2 Gamba Osaka 1; Yokohama F Marinos 0 FC Tokyo 1.

Mar 18: Nagoya Grampus Eight 0 Jubilo Iwata 1; FC Tokyo 2 Avispa Fukuoka 0; Shimizu S-Pulse 1 Yokohama F Marinos 2; Kyoto Purple Sanga 1 Cerezo Osaka 3; Gamba Osaka 1 Vissel Kobe 1 (aet); Sanfrecce Hiroshima 1 JEF United Ichihara 1 (aet); Kashiwa Reysol 1 Verdy Kawasaki 0; Kawasaki Frontale 0 Kashima Antlers 1.

JAPAN - FIRST STAGE

	P	W1	W2	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Tokyo	2	2	0	0	0	3	0	6
Kashima Antlers	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	6
Kashiwa Reysol	2	1	1	0	0	2	0	5
JEF United	2	1	0	1	0	7	2	4
Vissel Kobe	2	1	0	1	0	2	1	4
Cerezo Osaka	2	1	0	0	1	5	4	3
Shimizu S-Pulse	2	1	0	0	1	4	4	3
Verdy Kawasaki	2	1	0	0	1	2	2	3
Yokohama FM	2	1	0	0	1	2	2	3
Jubilo Iwata	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	3
Avispa Fukuoka	2	1	0	0	1	2	3	3
Gamba Osaka	2	0	0	1	1	2	3	1
Sanfrecce H	2	0	0	1	1	1	2	1
Kawasaki F	2	0	0	0	2	1	3	0
Grampus Eight	2	0	0	0	2	0	2	0
Kyoto PS	2	0	0	0	2	2	9	0

W1 = win in 90 mins (3 pts); W2 = win in extra time (2 pts); Draw = 1 pt

CLUB FIXTURES

JAPAN

FIRST STAGE

Sat, March 11

Kashima Antlers v Nagoya Grampus Eight
Jubilo Iwata v Kashiwa Reysol
JEF United Ichihara v Kyoto Purple Sanga
Vissel Kobe v Sanfrecce Hiroshima
Avispa Fukuoka v Kawasaki Frontale
Shimizu S-Pulse v Cerezo Osaka
Verdy Kawasaki v Gamba Osaka
Yokohama F Marinos v FC Tokyo

Sat, March 18

Nagoya Grampus Eight v Jubilo Iwata
FC Tokyo v Avispa Fukuoka
Shimizu S-Pulse v Yokohama F Marinos
Kyoto Purple Sanga v Cerezo Osaka
Gamba Osaka v Vissel Kobe
Sanfrecce Hiroshima v JEF United Ichihara
Kashiwa Reysol v Verdy Kawasaki
Kawasaki Frontale v Kashima Antlers

Sat, March 25

Kawasaki Frontale v Sanfrecce Hiroshima
Kyoto Purple Sanga v Gamba Osaka
Cerezo Osaka v Verdy Kawasaki
Shimizu S-Pulse v Kashiwa Reysol
Yokohama F Marinos v Jubilo Iwata
Avispa Fukuoka v Kashima Antlers
JEF United Ichihara v Vissel Kobe
FC Tokyo v Nagoya Grampus Eight

Sat, April 1

Verdy Kawasaki v JEF United Ichihara
Sanfrecce Hiroshima v Kyoto Purple Sanga
Kashiwa Reysol v FC Tokyo
Nagoya Grampus Eight v Avispa Fukuoka
Gamba Osaka v Shimizu S-Pulse
Kashima Antlers v Yokohama F Marinos
Jubilo Iwata v Cerezo Osaka
Vissel Kobe v Kawasaki Frontale

Wed, April 5

FC Tokyo v Jubilo Iwata
Kawasaki Frontale v Gamba Osaka
Yokohama F Marinos v Vissel Kobe
Shimizu S-Pulse v Kashima Antlers
Kyoto Purple Sanga v Nagoya Grampus Eight
Cerezo Osaka v JEF United Ichihara
Sanfrecce Hiroshima v Kashiwa Reysol
Avispa Fukuoka v Verdy Kawasaki

Sat, April 8

Nagoya Grampus Eight v Shimizu S-Pulse
Kashima Antlers v FC Tokyo
JEF United Ichihara v Kawasaki Frontale
Gamba Osaka v Sanfrecce Hiroshima
Vissel Kobe v Cerezo Osaka
Jubilo Iwata v Avispa Fukuoka
Kashiwa Reysol v Kyoto Purple Sanga
Verdy Kawasaki v Yokohama F Marinos

Sat, April 15

JEF United Ichihara v Jubilo Iwata
FC Tokyo v Gamba Osaka
Yokohama F Marinos v Nagoya Grampus Eight
Cerezo Osaka v Kashima Antlers
Kawasaki Frontale v Kyoto Purple Sanga
Vissel Kobe v Verdy Kawasaki
Avispa Fukuoka v Kashiwa Reysol

Sat, April 22

Verdy Kawasaki v Kawasaki Frontale
Nagoya Grampus Eight v Cerezo Osaka
Kashima Antlers v JEF United Ichihara
Kashiwa Reysol v Yokohama F Marinos
Kyoto Purple Sanga v Shimizu S-Pulse
Sanfrecce Hiroshima v FC Tokyo
Gamba Osaka v Avispa Fukuoka

Sat, April 29

JEF United Ichihara v Nagoya Grampus Eight
FC Tokyo v Kyoto Purple Sanga
Verdy Kawasaki v Jubilo Iwata
Yokohama F Marinos v Gamba Osaka
Vissel Kobe v Kashima Antlers
Avispa Fukuoka v Sanfrecce Hiroshima
Cerezo Osaka v Kashiwa Reysol
Kawasaki Frontale v Shimizu S-Pulse

Wed, May 3

Kashima Antlers v Verdy Kawasaki
Kawasaki Frontale v Jubilo Iwata
Nagoya Grampus Eight v Vissel Kobe
Kyoto Purple Sanga v Avispa Fukuoka
Gamba Osaka v Cerezo Osaka
Shimizu S-Pulse v FC Tokyo
Sanfrecce Hiroshima v Yokohama F Marinos
Kashiwa Reysol v JEF United Ichihara

Sat, May 6

FC Tokyo v Kawasaki Frontale
Verdy Kawasaki v Nagoya Grampus Eight
JEF United Ichihara v Gamba Osaka
Yokohama F Marinos v Kyoto Purple Sanga
Jubilo Iwata v Kashima Antlers
Cerezo Osaka v Sanfrecce Hiroshima
Vissel Kobe v Kashiwa Reysol
Avispa Fukuoka v Shimizu S-Pulse

Sat, May 13

Kawasaki Frontale v Nagoya Grampus Eight
Kashiwa Reysol v Kashima Antlers
FC Tokyo v Cerezo Osaka
Gamba Osaka v Jubilo Iwata
Sanfrecce Hiroshima v Verdy Kawasaki
Avispa Fukuoka v Yokohama F Marinos
Shimizu S-Pulse v JEF United Ichihara
Kyoto Purple Sanga v Vissel Kobe

Wed, May 17

Kashima Antlers v Gamba Osaka
JEF United Ichihara v FC Tokyo
Verdy Kawasaki v Kyoto Purple Sanga
Yokohama F Marinos v Kawasaki Frontale
Jubilo Iwata v Sanfrecce Hiroshima
Nagoya Grampus Eight v Kashiwa Reysol
Cerezo Osaka v Avispa Fukuoka
Vissel Kobe v Shimizu S-Pulse

Sat, May 20

FC Tokyo v Vissel Kobe
Shimizu S-Pulse v Verdy Kawasaki
Sanfrecce Hiroshima v Kashima Antlers
Kawasaki Frontale v Kashiwa Reysol
Avispa Fukuoka v JEF United Ichihara
Yokohama F Marinos v Cerezo Osaka
Kyoto Purple Sanga v Jubilo Iwata
Gamba Osaka v Nagoya Grampus Eight

Wed, May 24

Shimizu S-Pulse v Sanfrecce Hiroshima
Jubilo Iwata v Vissel Kobe

Sat, May 27

Kashima Antlers v Kyoto Purple Sanga
JEF United Ichihara v Yokohama F Marinos
Kashiwa Reysol v Gamba Osaka
Verdy Kawasaki v FC Tokyo
Jubilo Iwata v Shimizu S-Pulse
Nagoya Grampus Eight v Sanfrecce Hiroshima
Cerezo Osaka v Kawasaki Frontale
Vissel Kobe v Avispa Fukuoka

SECOND STAGE

Sat, June 24

Kawasaki Frontale v Avispa Fukuoka
Nagoya Grampus Eight v Kashima Antlers
Sanfrecce Hiroshima v Vissel Kobe
Kashiwa Reysol v Jubilo Iwata
FC Tokyo v Yokohama F Marinos
Kyoto Purple Sanga v JEF United Ichihara
Gamba Osaka v Verdy Kawasaki
Cerezo Osaka v Shimizu S-Pulse

Sat, July 1

Yokohama F Marinos v Shimizu S-Pulse
Kashima Antlers v Kawasaki Frontale
JEF United Ichihara v Sanfrecce Hiroshima
Verdy Kawasaki v Kashiwa Reysol
Jubilo Iwata v Nagoya Grampus Eight
Vissel Kobe v Gamba Osaka
Avispa Fukuoka v FC Tokyo
Cerezo Osaka v Kyoto Purple Sanga

Sat, July 8

Kashima Antlers v Jubilo Iwata
Shimizu S-Pulse v Avispa Fukuoka
Kyoto Purple Sanga v Yokohama F Marinos
Kashiwa Reysol v Vissel Kobe
Kawasaki Frontale v FC Tokyo
Nagoya Grampus Eight v Verdy Kawasaki
Gamba Osaka v JEF United Ichihara
Sanfrecce Hiroshima v Cerezo Osaka

Sat, July 15

JEF United Ichihara v Kashiwa Reysol
Verdy Kawasaki v Kashima Antlers
Yokohama F Marinos v Sanfrecce Hiroshima
Jubilo Iwata v Kawasaki Frontale
Vissel Kobe v Nagoya Grampus Eight
Avispa Fukuoka v Kyoto Purple Sanga
FC Tokyo v Shimizu S-Pulse
Cerezo Osaka v Gamba Osaka

Sat, July 22

Kashima Antlers v Vissel Kobe
Kashiwa Reysol v Cerezo Osaka
Shimizu S-Pulse v Kawasaki Frontale
Jubilo Iwata v Verdy Kawasaki
Nagoya Grampus Eight v JEF United Ichihara
Kyoto Purple Sanga v FC Tokyo
Gamba Osaka v Yokohama F Marinos
Sanfrecce Hiroshima v Avispa Fukuoka

Wed, July 26

JEF United Ichihara v Kashima Antlers
FC Tokyo v Sanfrecce Hiroshima
Kawasaki Frontale v Verdy Kawasaki
Yokohama F Marinos v Kashiwa Reysol
Shimizu S-Pulse v Kyoto Purple Sanga
Cerezo Osaka v Nagoya Grampus Eight
Vissel Kobe v Jubilo Iwata
Avispa Fukuoka v Gamba Osaka

Sat, July 29

Kashima Antlers v Cerezo Osaka
Kashiwa Reysol v Avispa Fukuoka
Verdy Kawasaki v Vissel Kobe
Jubilo Iwata v JEF United Ichihara
Nagoya Grampus Eight v Yokohama F Marinos
Kyoto Purple Sanga v Kawasaki Frontale
Gamba Osaka v FC Tokyo
Sanfrecce Hiroshima v Shimizu S-Pulse

Sat, August 5

JEF United Ichihara v Verdy Kawasaki
FC Tokyo v Kashiwa Reysol
Kawasaki Frontale v Vissel Kobe
Yokohama F Marinos v Kashima Antlers
Shimizu S-Pulse v Gamba Osaka
Kyoto Purple Sanga v Sanfrecce Hiroshima
Avispa Fukuoka v Nagoya Grampus Eight
Cerezo Osaka v Jubilo Iwata

Sat, August 12

Kashima Antlers v Avispa Fukuoka
Kashiwa Reysol v Shimizu S-Pulse
Verdy Kawasaki v Cerezo Osaka
Jubilo Iwata v Yokohama F Marinos

Nagoya Grampus Eight v FC Tokyo
Gamba Osaka v Kyoto Purple Sanga
Vissel Kobe v JEF United Ichihara
Sanfrecce Hiroshima v Kawasaki Frontale

Sat, August 19

FC Tokyo v Kashima Antlers
Kawasaki Frontale v JEF United Ichihara
Yokohama F Marinos v Verdy Kawasaki
Shimizu S-Pulse v Nagoya Grampus Eight
Kyoto Purple Sanga v Kashiwa Reysol
Sanfrecce Hiroshima v Gamba Osaka
Avispa Fukuoka v Jubilo Iwata
Cerezo Osaka v Vissel Kobe

Wed, November 8

Kashima Antlers v Shimizu S-Pulse
JEF United Ichihara v Cerezo Osaka
Kashiwa Reysol v Sanfrecce Hiroshima
Verdy Kawasaki v Avispa Fukuoka
Jubilo Iwata v FC Tokyo
Nagoya Grampus Eight v Kyoto Purple Sanga
Gamba Osaka v Kawasaki Frontale
Vissel Kobe v Yokohama F Marinos

Sat, November 11

FC Tokyo v Verdy Kawasaki
Gamba Osaka v Kashiwa Reysol
Kawasaki Frontale v Cerezo Osaka
Yokohama F Marinos v JEF United Ichihara
Kyoto Purple Sanga v Kashima Antlers
Sanfrecce Hiroshima v Nagoya Grampus Eight
Avispa Fukuoka v Vissel Kobe
Shimizu S-Pulse v Jubilo Iwata

Sat, November 18

Verdy Kawasaki v Shimizu S-Pulse
JEF United Ichihara v Avispa Fukuoka
Jubilo Iwata v Kyoto Purple Sanga
Nagoya Grampus Eight v Gamba Osaka
Vissel Kobe v FC Tokyo
Kashiwa Reysol v Kawasaki Frontale
Kashima Antlers v Sanfrecce Hiroshima
Cerezo Osaka v Yokohama F Marinos

Thur, November 23

Kawasaki Frontale v Yokohama F Marinos
FC Tokyo v JEF United Ichihara
Shimizu S-Pulse v Vissel Kobe
Kyoto Purple Sanga v Verdy Kawasaki
Gamba Osaka v Kashima Antlers
Sanfrecce Hiroshima v Jubilo Iwata
Avispa Fukuoka v Cerezo Osaka
Kashiwa Reysol v Nagoya Grampus Eight

Sun, November 26

Kashima Antlers v Kashiwa Reysol
JEF United Ichihara v Shimizu S-Pulse
Verdy Kawasaki v Sanfrecce Hiroshima
Yokohama F Marinos v Avispa Fukuoka
Jubilo Iwata v Gamba Osaka
Nagoya Grampus Eight v Kawasaki Frontale
Vissel Kobe v Kyoto Purple Sanga
Cerezo Osaka v FC Tokyo

NORWAY

Sun, April 9

Brann v Viking
Bryne v Start
Haugesund v Bodo/Glimt
Lillestrom v Molde
Moss v Odd Grenland
Stabaek v Rosenborg
Valerenga v Tromso

Sun, April 16

Bodo/Glimt v Valerenga
Molde v Haugesund
Odd Grenland v Stabaek
Rosenborg v Brann
Start v Moss
Tromso v Bryne
Viking v Lillestrom

Wed, April 19

Brann v Odd Grenland
Bryne v Bodo/Glimt
Haugesund v Valerenga
Lillestrom v Rosenborg
Molde v Viking
Moss v Tromso
Stabaek v Start

Sun, April 30

Bodo/Glimt v Moss
Odd Grenland v Lillestrom
Rosenborg v Molde
Start v Brann
Tromso v Stabaek
Viking v Haugesund
Valerenga v Bryne

Wed, May 3

Brann v Tromso
Haugesund v Bryne
Lillestrom v Start
Molde v Odd Grenland
Moss v Valerenga
Stabaek v Bodo/Glimt
Viking v Rosenborg

Sun, May 7

Bodo/Glimt v Brann
Bryne v Moss
Odd Grenland v Viking
Rosenborg v Haugesund
Start v Molde
Tromso v Lillestrom
Valerenga v Stabaek

Wed, May 10

Brann v Valerenga
Haugesund v Moss
Lillestrom v Bodo/Glimt
Molde v Tromso
Rosenborg v Odd Grenland
Stabaek v Bryne
Viking v Start

Sat, May 13

Bodo/Glimt v Molde
Bryne v Brann
Moss v Stabaek
Odd Grenland v Haugesund
Start v Rosenborg
Tromso v Viking
Valerenga v Lillestrom

Tues, May 16

Brann v Moss
Haugesund v Stabaek
Lillestrom v Bryne
Molde v Valerenga
Odd Grenland v Start
Rosenborg v Tromso
Viking v Bodo/Glimt

Sun, May 21

Bodo/Glimt v Rosenborg
Bryne v Molde
Moss v Lillestrom
Stabaek v Brann
Start v Haugesund
Tromso v Odd Grenland
Valerenga v Viking

Sun, July 2

Haugesund v Brann
Lillestrom v Stabaek
Molde v Moss
Odd Grenland v Bodo/Glimt
Rosenborg v Valerenga
Start v Tromso
Viking v Bryne

Wed, July 5

Bodo/Glimt v Start
Brann v Lillestrom
Bryne v Rosenborg
Haugesund v Tromso
Moss v Viking
Stabaek v Molde
Valerenga v Odd Grenland

Sun, July 9

Lillestrom v Haugesund
Molde v Brann
Odd Grenland v Bryne
Rosenborg v Moss
Start v Valerenga
Tromso v Bodo/Glimt
Viking v Stabaek

Wed, July 12

Molde v Rosenborg

Sun, July 16

Bodo/Glimt v Haugesund
Odd Grenland v Moss
Rosenborg v Stabaek
Start v Bryne
Tromso v Valerenga
Viking v Brann

Mon, July 17

Molde v Lillestrom

Sun, July 23

Brann v Rosenborg
Bryne v Tromso
Haugesund v Molde
Lillestrom v Viking
Moss v Start
Stabaek v Odd Grenland
Valerenga v Bodo/Glimt

Sun, July 30

Bodo/Glimt v Bryne
Odd Grenland v Brann
Rosenborg v Lillestrom
Start v Stabaek
Tromso v Moss
Viking v Molde

Mon, July 31

Valerenga v Haugesund

Wed, August 2

Brann v Start
Bryne v Valerenga
Haugesund v Viking
Lillestrom v Odd Grenland
Moss v Bodo/Glimt
Stabaek v Tromso

Sun, August 6

Bodo/Glimt v Stabaek
Bryne v Haugesund
Odd Grenland v Molde
Rosenborg v Viking
Start v Lillestrom
Tromso v Brann
Valerenga v Moss

Sun, August 13

Brann v Bodo/Glimt
Haugesund v Rosenborg
Lillestrom v Tromso
Molde v Start
Moss v Bryne
Stabaek v Valerenga
Viking v Odd Grenland

Sun, August 20

Bodo/Glimt v Lillestrom
Bryne v Stabaek
Moss v Haugesund
Odd Grenland v Rosenborg
Start v Viking
Tromso v Molde
Valerenga v Brann

Sun, August 27

Brann v Bryne
Haugesund v Odd Grenland
Lillestrom v Valerenga
Molde v Bodo/Glimt
Rosenborg v Start
Stabaek v Moss
Viking v Tromso

Sun, September 10

Bodo/Glimt v Viking
Bryne v Lillestrom
Moss v Brann
Stabaek v Haugesund
Start v Odd Grenland
Tromso v Rosenborg
Valerenga v Molde

Sun, September 17

Brann v Stabaek
Haugesund v Start
Lillestrom v Moss
Molde v Bryne
Odd Grenland v Tromso
Rosenborg v Bodo/Glimt
Viking v Valerenga

Sun, October 1

Bodo/Glimt v Odd Grenland
Brann v Haugesund
Bryne v Viking
Moss v Molde
Stabaek v Lillestrom
Tromso v Start
Valerenga v Rosenborg

Sun, October 15

Lillestrom v Brann
Molde v Stabaek
Odd Grenland v Valerenga
Rosenborg v Bryne
Start v Bodo/Glimt
Tromso v Haugesund
Viking v Moss

Sun, October 22

Bodo/Glimt v Tromso
Brann v Molde
Bryne v Odd Grenland
Haugesund v Lillestrom
Moss v Posenborg
Stabaek v Viking
Valerenga v Start

SWEDEN

Sat, April 8

Orgryte v Helsingborgs

Sun, April 9

GAIS v Vastra Frolunda
Trelleborgs v Halmstads
Orebro v Norrkoping

Mon, April 10

Elfsborg v AIK
Hammarby v Sundsvall
Hacken v IFK Gothenburg

Sun, April 16

Halmstads v Elfsborg
Sundsvall v Orebro
Vastra Frolunda v Trelleborgs

Mon, April 17

AIK v Hacken
IFK Gothenburg v Orgryte
Helsingborgs v Hammarby

Tues, April 18

Norrkoping v GAIS

Fri, April 21

Elfsborg v Helsingborgs
Halmstads v AIK
Trelleborgs v IFK Gothenburg
Orebro v Vastra Frolunda
Orgryte v Norrkoping

Sat, April 22

Hammarby v GAIS

Mon, April 24

Hacken v Sundsvall

Sun, April 30

GAIS v Orebro
Sundsvall v Orgryte
Vastra Frolunda v Halmstads

Mon, May 1

AIK v Trelleborgs
IFK Gothenburg v Elfsborg
Helsingborgs v Hacken

Tues, May 2

Norrkoping v Hammarby

Sun, May 7

Halmstads v Orgryte
Trelleborgs v Hacken
Vastra Frolunda v Elfsborg

Mon, May 8

AIK v Hammarby
IFK Gothenburg v Orebro
Helsingborgs v GAIS
Sundsvall v Norrkoping

Sun, May 14

Elfsborg v Trelleborgs
GAIS v Sundsvall
Hacken v Halmstads

Mon, May 15

Norrkoping v Vastra Frolunda
Orebro v Helsingborgs
Orgryte v AIK

Tues, May 16

Hammarby v IFK Gothenburg

Sun, May 21

Hacken v Elfsborg
Sundsvall v Vastra Frolunda
Orgryte v Trelleborgs

Mon, May 22

GAIS v IFK Gothenburg
Hammarby v Halmstads
Norrkoping v Helsingborgs
Orebro v AIK

Sun, May 28

IFK Gothenburg v Norrkoping
Halmstads v Orebro
Trelleborgs v Hammarby

Mon, May 29

Elfsborg v Orgryte
GAIS v AIK
Helsingborgs v Sundsvall

Tues, May 30

Vastra Frolunda v Hacken

Tues, July 4

GAIS v Halmstads
Hammarby v Elfsborg

Wed, July 5

Helsingborgs v Vastra Frolunda
Norrkoping v AIK
Sundsvall v IFK Gothenburg
Orebro v Trelleborgs
Orgryte v Hacken

Sun, July 9

Trelleborgs v GAIS

Mon, July 10

AIK v Sundsvall
Elfsborg v Orebro
Hacken v Hammarby

Tues, July 11

IFK Gothenburg v Helsingborgs

Wed, July 12

Halmstads v Norrkoping
Vastra Frolunda v Orgryte

Sun, July 16

IFK Gothenburg v Vastra Frolunda

Mon, July 17

GAIS v Elfsborg
Sundsvall v Halmstads
Orebro v Hacken

Tues, July 18

Helsingborgs v AIK

Wed, July 19

Hammarby v Orgryte
Norrkoping v Trelleborgs

Sat, July 22

Halmstads v Helsingborgs

Mon, July 24

Trelleborgs v Sundsvall
Vastra Frolunda v Hammarby

Tues, July 25

Hacken v GAIS

Sat, July 29

Elfsborg v Norrkoping
Orgryte v Orebro
Trelleborgs v Helsingborgs

Sun, July 30

AIK v IFK Gothenburg

Tues, August 1

Hacken v Norrkoping

Wed, August 2

IFK Gothenburg v Halmstads
Sundsvall v Elfsborg

Thur, August 3

AIK v Vastra Frolunda
GAIS v Orgryte
Orebro v Hammarby

Sat, August 5

Helsingborgs v Halmstads

Sun, August 6

IFK Gothenburg v AIK
Sundsvall v Trelleborgs

Mon, August 7

GAIS v Hacken
Norrkoping v Elfsborg
Orebro v Orgryte

Tues, August 8

Hammarby v Vastra Frolunda

Thur, August 10

Hacken v Orebro

Sat, August 12

Vastra Frolunda v IFK Gothenburg

Sun, August 13

AIK v Helsingborgs
Elfsborg v GAIS
Halmstads v Sundsvall
Trelleborgs v Norrkoping
Orgryte v Hammarby

Sat, August 19

Helsingborgs v IFK Gothenburg

Sun, August 20

Norrkoping v Halmstads
Sundsvall v AIK

Mon, August 21

GAIS v Trelleborgs
Hammarby v Hacken
Orebro v Elfsborg

Tues, August 22

Orgryte v Vastra Frolunda

Sat, August 26

IFK Gothenburg v Sundsvall
Sun, August 27
Halmstads v GAIS
Trelleborgs v Orebro
Vastra Frolunda v Helsingborgs

Mon, August 28

AIK v Norrkoping
Elfsborg v Hammarby
Hacken v Orgryte

Tues, September 5

Helsingborgs v Trelleborgs
Orgryte v GAIS

Wed, September 6

Elfsborg v Sundsvall
Halmstads v IFK Gothenburg
Hammarby v Orebro
Norrkoping v Hacken
Vastra Frolunda v AIK

Sat, September 9

Sundsvall v Helsingborgs

Sun, September 10

AIK v GAIS
Orebro v Halmstads

Mon, September 11

Hammarby v Trelleborgs
Hacken v Vastra Frolunda
Orgryte v Elfsborg

Tues, September 12

Norrkoping v IFK Gothenburg

Sat, September 16

Helsingborgs v Norrkoping

Sun, September 17

AIK v Orebro
Halmstads v Hammarby
Trelleborgs v Orgryte
Vastra Frolunda v Sundsvall

Mon, September 18

Elfsborg v Hacken

Tues, September 19

IFK Gothenburg v GAIS

Wed, September 20

Hammarby v AIK

Sat, September 23

GAIS v Helsingborgs

Sun, September 24

Norrkoping v Sundsvall
Orgryte v Halmstads

Mon, September 25

Elfsborg v Vastra Frolunda
Hacken v Trelleborgs

Tues, September 26

Orebro v IFK Gothenburg

Sun, October 1

AIK v Orgryte
Halmstads v Hacken
Trelleborgs v Elfsborg
Vastra Frolunda v Norrkoping

Mon, October 2

IFK Gothenburg v Hammarby
Helsingborgs v Orebro
Sundsvall v GAIS

Sat, October 14

Hacken v Helsingborgs

Sun, October 15

Halmstads v Vastra Frolunda
Trelleborgs v AIK

Mon, October 16

Elfsborg v IFK Gothenburg
Orebro v GAIS
Orgryte v Sundsvall

Tues, October 17

Hammarby v Norrkoping

Sat, October 21

Helsingborgs v Elfsborg

Sun, October 22

IFK Gothenburg v Trelleborgs
Sundsvall v Hacken

Mon, October 23

GAIS v Hammarby
Norrkoping v Orgryte
Vastra Frolunda v Orebro

Tues, October 24

AIK v Halmstads

Sat, October 28

Elfsborg v Halmstads
Hammarby v Helsingborgs
Trelleborgs v Vastra Frolunda
Orebro v Sundsvall
Orgryte v IFK Gothenburg

Sun, October 29

GAIS v Norrkoping
Hacken v AIK

Sun, November 5

AIK v Elfsborg
IFK Gothenburg v Hacken
Halmstads v Trelleborgs
Helsingborgs v Orgryte
Norrkoping v Orebro
Sundsvall v Hammarby
Vastra Frolunda v GAIS

USA

Sat, March 18

Tampa Bay Mutiny v Columbus Crew
Miami Fusion v New England Revolution
Dallas Burn v Chicago Fire
Los Angeles Galaxy v Colorado Rapids

Sat, March 25

Tampa Bay Mutiny v New England Revolution
Kansas City Wizards v Chicago Fire
Dallas Burn v Colorado Rapids
Columbus Crew v San Jose Earthquakes
DC United v Los Angeles Galaxy

Sun, March 26

Miami Fusion v NY/NJ MetroStars

Sat, April 1

Miami Fusion v San Jose Earthquakes
Columbus Crew v Chicago Fire
Kansas City Wizards v Colorado Rapids
Dallas Burn v Tampa Bay Mutiny
Los Angeles Galaxy v New England Revolution
NY/NJ MetroStars v DC United

Sat, April 8

Colorado Rapids v Tampa Bay Mutiny
Miami Fusion v Kansas City Wizards
Columbus Crew v Los Angeles Galaxy
Dallas Burn v New England Revolution
DC United v Chicago Fire
San Jose Earthquakes v NY/NJ MetroStars

Sat, April 15

NY/NJ MetroStars v Columbus Crew
New England Revolution v DC United
Tampa Bay Mutiny v Colorado Rapids
Chicago Fire v Miami Fusion
Kansas City Wizards v San Jose Earthquakes
Los Angeles Galaxy v Dallas Burn

Wed, April 19

NY/NJ MetroStars v Kansas City Wizards

Sat, April 22

New England Revolution v Chicago Fire
DC United v NY/NJ MetroStars
Columbus Crew v Colorado Rapids
Kansas City Wizards v Tampa Bay Mutiny
Los Angeles Galaxy v Miami Fusion
San Jose Earthquakes v Dallas Burn

Wed, April 26

Tampa Bay Mutiny v San Jose Earthquakes

Fri, April 28

Chicago Fire v Tampa Bay Mutiny

Sat, April 29

New England Revolution v Miami Fusion
NY/NJ MetroStars v Los Angeles Galaxy
Dallas Burn v Columbus Crew
Colorado Rapids v Kansas City Wizards
San Jose Earthquakes v DC United

Wed, May 3

Chicago Fire v Colorado Rapids
DC United v Columbus Crew

Sat, May 6

Tampa Bay Mutiny v Dallas Burn
Miami Fusion v Chicago Fire
Columbus Crew v NY/NJ MetroStars
New England Revolution v San Jose Earthquakes
Colorado Rapids v DC United
Los Angeles Galaxy v Kansas City Wizards

Wed, May 10

Miami Fusion v DC United

Sat, May 13

Tampa Bay Mutiny v Columbus Crew
DC United v New England Revolution
Chicago Fire v San Jose Earthquakes
Kansas City Wizards v NY/NJ MetroStars
Dallas Burn v Los Angeles Galaxy
Colorado Rapids v Miami Fusion

Wed, May 17

New England Revolution v Colorado Rapids
Kansas City Wizards v DC United
San Jose Earthquakes v Los Angeles Galaxy

Sat, May 20

NY/NJ MetroStars v Tampa Bay Mutiny
Miami Fusion v Colorado Rapids
Columbus Crew v Dallas Burn
Kansas City Wizards v San Jose Earthquakes
Chicago Fire v New England Revolution
Los Angeles Galaxy v DC United

Wed, May 24

New England Revolution v Los Angeles Galaxy
Chicago Fire v Dallas Burn

Sat, May 27

Tampa Bay Mutiny v Kansas City Wizards
NY/NJ MetroStars v Chicago Fire
DC United v Dallas Burn
Miami Fusion v Columbus Crew
Los Angeles Galaxy v San Jose Earthquakes

Mon, May 29

Colorado Rapids v New England Revolution

Sat, June 3

San Jose Earthquakes v Colorado Rapids
Columbus Crew v DC United
New England Revolution v Miami Fusion
Dallas Burn v Tampa Bay Mutiny
Los Angeles Galaxy v NY/NJ MetroStars

Sun, June 4

Chicago Fire v Kansas City Wizards

Wed, June 7

Dallas Burn v Columbus Crew

Fri, June 9

NY/NJ MetroStars v Tampa Bay Mutiny

Sat, June 10

Columbus Crew v Dallas Burn
New England Revolution v San Jose Earthquakes
DC United v Kansas City Wizards
Miami Fusion v Chicago Fire
Colorado Rapids v Los Angeles Galaxy

Sat, June 17

NY/NJ MetroStars v New England Revolution
Chicago Fire v DC United
Dallas Burn v Kansas City Wizards
Colorado Rapids v Columbus Crew
Los Angeles Galaxy v Tampa Bay Mutiny
San Jose Earthquakes v Miami Fusion

Wed, June 21

Tampa Bay Mutiny v Miami Fusion
NY/NJ MetroStars v DC United
Kansas City Wizards v Dallas Burn
San Jose Earthquakes v New England Revolution
Los Angeles Galaxy v Chicago Fire

Sat, June 24

Colorado Rapids v NY/NJ MetroStars
DC United v Dallas Burn
Miami Fusion v Tampa Bay Mutiny
Columbus Crew v New England Revolution
Kansas City Wizards v Los Angeles Galaxy
San Jose Earthquakes v Chicago Fire

Wed, June 28

NY/NJ MetroStars v San Jose Earthquakes
DC United v Los Angeles Galaxy
Columbus Crew v Tampa Bay Mutiny

Sat, July 1

Columbus Crew v San Jose Earthquakes
New England Revolution v Kansas City Wizards
Tampa Bay Mutiny v NY/NJ MetroStars
DC United v Colorado Rapids
Chicago Fire v Miami Fusion
Dallas Burn v Los Angeles Galaxy

Tues, July 4

Miami Fusion v New England Revolution
Tampa Bay Mutiny v DC United
Colorado Rapids v Chicago Fire
San Jose Earthquakes v Kansas City Wizards
Los Angeles Galaxy v Columbus Crew

Wed, July 5

NY/NJ MetroStars v Dallas Burn

Sat, July 8

Miami Fusion v Los Angeles Galaxy
Dallas Burn v DC United
Chicago Fire v Columbus Crew
Kansas City Wizards v NY/NJ MetroStars
Colorado Rapids v San Jose Earthquakes

Wed, July 12

DC United v Tampa Bay Mutiny
Columbus Crew v New England Revolution
Colorado Rapids v Dallas Burn

Sat, July 15

New England Revolution v NY/NJ MetroStars
Miami Fusion v Dallas Burn
Columbus Crew v Kansas City Wizards
Chicago Fire v Tampa Bay Mutiny
San Jose Earthquakes v Colorado Rapids
Los Angeles Galaxy v DC United

Wed, July 19

Kansas City Wizards v New England Revolution
Dallas Burn v Miami Fusion

Sat, July 22

San Jose Earthquakes v New England Revolution
NY/NJ MetroStars v Miami Fusion
Tampa Bay Mutiny v Los Angeles Galaxy
Kansas City Wizards v Columbus Crew
Colorado Rapids v Chicago Fire

Wed, August 2

New England Revolution v Dallas Burn
Tampa Bay Mutiny v Chicago Fire
DC United v NY/NJ MetroStars
Kansas City Wizards v Colorado Rapids
San Jose Earthquakes v Columbus Crew

Sat, August 5

New England Revolution v Columbus Crew
DC United v Miami Fusion
Kansas City Wizards v Los Angeles Galaxy
Colorado Rapids v San Jose Earthquakes

Sun, August 6

Chicago Fire v NY/NJ MetroStars
Tampa Bay Mutiny v Dallas Burn

Sat, August 12

Chicago Fire v Columbus Crew
San Jose Earthquakes v Tampa Bay Mutiny
NY/NJ MetroStars v New England Revolution
Miami Fusion v Colorado Rapids
Dallas Burn v DC United
Los Angeles Galaxy v Kansas City Wizards

Wed, August 16

Tampa Bay Mutiny v NY/NJ MetroStars
Los Angeles Galaxy v Colorado Rapids
Columbus Crew v Miami Fusion
Dallas Burn v Chicago Fire
San Jose Earthquakes v Kansas City Wizards

Fri, August 18

Kansas City Wizards v Miami Fusion

Sat, August 19

Chicago Fire v Los Angeles Galaxy
New England Revolution v Tampa Bay Mutiny
DC United v San Jose Earthquakes

Sun, August 20

NY/NJ MetroStars v Colorado Rapids

Wed, August 23

NY/NJ MetroStars v Kansas City Wizards

Sat, August 26

New England Revolution v Columbus Crew
Tampa Bay Mutiny v Chicago Fire
Miami Fusion v DC United
Dallas Burn v NY/NJ MetroStars
Colorado Rapids v Kansas City Wizards
San Jose Earthquakes v Los Angeles Galaxy

Wed, August 30

New England Revolution v DC United
Columbus Crew v Tampa Bay Mutiny
Chicago Fire v Dallas Burn
Colorado Rapids v Miami Fusion
Los Angeles Galaxy v San Jose Earthquakes

Sat, September 2

DC United v New England Revolution
Miami Fusion v NY/NJ MetroStars
Chicago Fire v Colorado Rapids
Kansas City Wizards v Tampa Bay Mutiny
San Jose Earthquakes v Columbus Crew

Tues, September 5

NY/NJ MetroStars v Miami Fusion

Wed, September 6

Los Angeles Galaxy v Dallas Burn

Fri, September 8

DC United v Miami Fusion

Sat, September 9

New England Revolution v NY/NJ MetroStars
Tampa Bay Mutiny v Kansas City Wizards
Columbus Crew v Chicago Fire
Dallas Burn v San Jose Earthquakes

Sun, September 10

Colorado Rapids v Los Angeles Galaxy

REVISED FIXTURES

ENGLAND

Sheff Wed v Aston Villa *Wed, Apr 5 (was Apr 1)*
West Ham v Newcastle *Wed, Apr 12 (was Apr 8)*
Arsenal v West Ham *Tues, May 2 (was Apr 25)*

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Black Thursday prompts anxiety attack

The UEFA Cup debacle has clubs licking their wounds, reports Paddy Agnew

'DISASTRO'. The eight-column, full-page headline in *Corriere Dello Sport* said it all. 'Black Thursday' had struck, plunging Italian soccer into a crisis.

"After a night like that, how do you convince the rest of the world that the Italian League is really the best in the world?," asked a perplexed, front-page leader in *Gazzetta Dello Sport*.

The night in question, the 'Black Thursday' that left Italian soccer licking unaccustomed wounds, was on March 9, when League leaders Juventus, UEFA Cup holders Parma and title challengers Roma all plunged out of the UEFA Cup, eliminated respectively by Celta Vigo, Werder Bremen and Leeds United.

Earlier in the week another Italian club, Udinese, had gone out, beaten by Slavia Prague.

Fright night...Juventus went out of the UEFA Cup to Celta Vigo, but were they really bothered?

Not since 1984 had Italian soccer found itself without at least one representative in the quarter-finals of the UEFA Cup, a competition that Italian clubs have monopolised in recent times by winning eight out of the last 11 editions.

Making matters worse was the worrying consideration that Italy's remaining two representatives in the Champions League, Lazio and Fiorentina, had been struggling.

'Black Thursday' prompted a collective fit of the jitters. Commentator after commentator asked the same anxious questions. Is Serie A too stressful? Have other Leagues caught up on us? Have we bought in too many mercenary foreigners, unwilling to give blood, sweat and tears for our clubs? Are our players simply overpaid and consequently under-motivated? Is the present generation of Italian players short on quality? Is the consistently polemical and contentious behaviour of our players tolerated too much at home and punished too much abroad? Did the clubs arrogantly under-estimate their opponents?

Perhaps elements of all the above played their part. The UEFA Cup debacle was bad enough but it must be recalled that it has come in a season in which both Parma and Milan crashed out of the Champions League before Christmas.

Parma fell at the first fence, beaten by Scottish champions Rangers in the pre-qualifying round last August.

Worse still, reigning Italian champions Milan conceded two goals in the final five minutes of a Champions League group game against Galatasaray in November to lose 3-2, which not only put them out of the competition but also ended their hopes of a consolation place in the UEFA Cup.

Such a combination of poor results certainly merits a pause for thought. When the fuss has died

down, however, a more prosaic analysis might focus on some obvious considerations. For a start, Celta Vigo, Werder Bremen and Leeds are not only decent teams in their own right but have all been going well in their respective domestic Leagues. Then again, Juventus, Parma and Roma all had perfectly good chances to win their ties and, for different reasons, threw them away.

Take the most prestigious victims of all, Juventus. Having won the first leg against Celta 1-0 (but not without difficulty), the 'Old Lady' decided to leave arguably her two most in-form players, Zinedine Zidane and Filippo Inzaghi, on the bench for the return leg.

The suspicion that Juventus were not treating the game with due seriousness was soon confirmed when Vigo's Claude Makelele struck a first-minute goal. From that point, things went from bad to worse (it ended in a 4-0 defeat), with Juve giving an epic comedy of errors performance, conceding breathtakingly clumsy goals while at the same time having Antonio Conte and Paolo Montero justifiably sent off for petulant and violent behaviour.

That this was not the 'real' Juventus became all too obvious when the same side returned to Italy to stretch their Serie A lead to six points three days later, beating Piacenza 2-0. Curiously, too, while Zidane was rested for the UEFA Cup game in Spain, he started the match against mighty Piacenza, at the time bottom of the League.

Perhaps Juventus had travelled to Vigo still harbouring ambitions of winning the UEFA Cup. Perhaps, indeed, but the impression given was rather the contrary, namely that the Old Lady understandably sees a 26th Italian title as a great deal more important than the UEFA Cup.

Put another way, Juventus reckoned that ensuring qualification for the more remunerative Champions League was a great deal more important than winning the rinky-dink, low-rent, 'who-cares-anyway' UEFA Cup. Money may well have been talking, and loudly too.

Parma were the second biggest casualties of the night. In a season of ups and downs, their defeat by Werder Bremen was hardly a shock. Ten days earlier, they had performed miserably in a 4-0 thrashing by Fiorentina, who had gone 13 months without an away win in Serie A.

Parma, however, had their chances against Werder, having won the first leg 1-0 at home and overcome the shock of conceding an early goal in the second leg to come back and equalise. But with the score at 1-1, Parma spectacularly failed to wrap up the qualification in at least three counter-attacking situations.

In one, three players were clear with only Werder goalkeeper Frank Rost to beat, but Mario Stanic messed it up, shooting when a pass to Lilian Thuram probably would have settled the tie there and then.

In short, Parma had only themselves to blame when Werder proceeded to beat them 3-1 on the night and 3-2 overall.

As for Roma, they were perhaps the only genuine hard luck story. They lost their tie with Leeds in a 0-0 first leg at home, when only bad luck, occasional bad finishing and consistently excellent goalkeeping from Nigel Martyn stood between them and a comfortable win.

In conclusion, then, 'Black Thursday' has not sounded the death knell of Italian soccer. Rather, it has given Italian clubs a healthy kick up the backside, reminding them that success in Europe cannot be taken for granted, track record notwithstanding.

Intriguingly, Europe's loss could be Italy's gain. As the title contest settles into the white-hot period of late March through early April, three of the European casualties, Juventus, Milan and Roma, are free to focus on an intriguing race which also involves Lazio and Internazionale.

For the time being, and notwithstanding Vigo, Juventus remain the favourites. Emblematic of the Turin side's commitment to the championship cause was an emphatic 2-1 defeat of Roma, and this having played 50 minutes at a numerical disadvantage following the sending-off (again) of Montero.

Juve's ability to make light of their disadvantage, scoring the winning goal in the opening minute of the second half, was awesome, title-winning stuff.

Furthermore, victory inflicted serious psychological damage on Juve's major title rivals, starting with Roma, as Leeds were happily to discover five days later.

Further direct confrontations with championship rivals, away to Milan on March 29, at home to Lazio on April 2 and away to Inter on April 16, will almost certainly decide the fate of this season's *scudetto*.

If and when Juventus do win the title, who will care a fig about 'Black Thursday'?

Pro-file Stefano Fiore

Udinese star looking like Italy's man of the moment

SPRING has sprung and 24-year-old Udinese midfielder Stefano Fiore is flowering into a budding Italian international.

He has blossomed magnificently since leaving Parma for Udinese last summer and it was entirely predictable when national coach Dino Zoff called him up for the friendly with Sweden in Lecce in February.

What was surprising was that Fiore should make his debut as playmaker, leaping over Francesco Totti of Roma in the pecking order. "Totti is more of an attacker," claimed Zoff. "Fiore has been playing to a very high standard this season both as a pure midfielder and just behind the strikers. He certainly deserves his chance."

While Fiore could feel relatively happy with a composed and purposeful debut performance, it is far too early to say whether he will turn out to be the creative inspiration Italy need so badly. He does not have the touch and flair of such great orchestrators as Gianni Rivera, Giancarlo Antognoni and even Giuseppe Giannini. Yet Fiore has qualities of his own – his strength on the ball, the ability to see attacking possibilities early, a swashbuckling, adventurous approach and composure in front of goal.

Moreover, his chances of going to Euro 2000 can only be enhanced by his adaptability. Not only can he play in the hole behind the strikers or fill the midfield general role, but he also has experience as a left-flank raider and as a midfield minder.

Fiore says: "I'll play in any position if it means wearing the blue shirt. At the start of the season, my only aim was to establish myself in the Udinese side. But now I'm in the Italian squad and I'm thrilled.

"It would be the highest point of my career if I was selected for Euro 2000, but there is a lot of competition for places and not a lot of time left for me to stake my claim. I played in over 50 games for Parma, but with all the high-profile, international players there, I was not so important. At Udinese it's completely different. I play week in, week out and have much more responsibility. That, and the attacking football Udinese play, has brought out the best in me."

With one-time Italian engine-room stalwarts Dino Baggio and Demetrio Albertini now seemingly past their prime and Zoff still doubtful about Totti's effectiveness in midfield, Fiore is looking like the man of the moment.

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Udinese
Country Italy
Born April 17, 1975, in Cosenza
Previous clubs Cosenza, Parma, Padova, Chievo, Parma
International debut February 2000, v Sweden
International caps 1 (0 goals)
Honours UEFA Cup 1995, 1999 (Parma); Italian Cup 1999 (Parma)

Anelka pays up but still won't shut up

Keir Radnedge on the ongoing saga of Real Madrid's troubled striker

Distant look...Anelka on the bench and out of touch with his Real Madrid team-mates

NICOLAS ANELKA'S latest delusion, as revealed in his justification for skipping training with Real Madrid, is to believe he is up there on a par with World Footballer of the Year Rivaldo.

Last December Rivaldo complained in public about the tactics being employed at Spanish champions Barcelona by coach Louis Van Gaal. He even provoked his own relegation to the substitutes' bench before advisers warned him that this was one battle he could not win.

France striker Anelka is now desperately in need of the same advice, according to Madrid coach Vicente Del Bosque, who is uncertain whether the 20-year-old and his notorious brothers will learn Rivaldo's lesson.

Anelka was suspended by Madrid for 45 days – effectively a fine of around £250,000 – for refusing to train on three successive days in an idiosyncratic protest over Del Bosque's attacking tactics. He had cost Madrid what appears an increasingly foolhardy £23million from Arsenal last summer, and he still believes his one-man anarchy campaign to be justified.

He said: "I know what I did wasn't good but I needed to be heard. Our defeats by Bayern Munich in the Champions League proved that things are not going well. I'm trying to demonstrate that Real are not taking advantage of my strengths.

"I want to be of use to the club but they won't let me. I tried to explain myself to the coach but he didn't want to listen and I had to do something. I couldn't just be quiet.

"On the pitch, the ball just doesn't arrive and I can't feel at home in those circumstances. I've never felt welcome here, the passes don't arrive and that makes me feel uncomfortable. I'm not taking part in the game and that's a disgrace for any footballer.

"I want to do well for Madrid. This is my club. But everyone here speaks badly of me and I've been warned to get out four or five times.

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But I won't let them treat me like a dog. How would anyone be expected to react?"

Anelka even offered to give Madrid their money back if they would let him go home to France to play football in peace. He said: "Let them keep their money, I just want to play football for a friendly club and a coach who believes in me."

The root of Anelka's anger appears to be the growing realisation that he has little chance of playing for France at Euro 2000. He said: "I have to live with this thought every day and it's getting unbearable."

For France team-mate David Trezeguet and Madrid's old inspiration, Alfredo Di Stefano, the problem centres not on tactics but on what Trezeguet described as "social humility".

The Monaco forward said: "I had to learn the same lessons when I came to play in France [he had been raised in Argentina]. You have to adjust to the lifestyle and football here. It's no good expecting everyone to change just for you. Nicolas needs to take that on board."

Di Stefano said: "Perhaps the answer is to sell the present team and buy another one. Then, if Anelka doesn't like those players, Real can sell them and buy another team. On the other hand, of course, it might make more sense to get rid of Anelka instead – cut their losses."

The irony is that, just a few weeks earlier, Anelka was everyone's favourite after his goalscoring comeback in the match that matters most to Madrid, against Barcelona.

Little more than a month earlier Madrid had returned from the World Club Championship in Brazil – where they finished fourth – to find they had slipped to 17th in the 20-club top division and were one point above the relegation zone. Then several wins during a busy month, climaxed by a 3-0 victory over Barcelona, lifted them back into the title race.

The match-winning heroes included not only Anelka, with his first League goal for Madrid, but Raul, making a surprisingly early return after injury.

"At last we showed what we can do," said Real and Brazil left-back Roberto Carlos, who had opened the scoring with a typical free-kick. "I said, when we came back from Brazil, that we could still win the League. Nobody believed me. But we have the ability and self-belief to achieve the comeback of the season. Beating Barcelona proves it."

Anelka, back after straining knee ligaments in Brazil, tapped in the second goal on 23 minutes when Francesc Arnau could only parry a shot from Raul following a left-wing move between Roberto Carlos and midfielder Guti.

Eight minutes into the second half striker Fernando Morientes secured victory when he took a pass from raiding right-back Michel Salgado and turned veteran defender Abelardo before sliding in number three.

"We had our chances after their first two goals but failed to take them," said disappointed Barcelona coach Louis Van Gaal. This was the first time he had lost at Bernabeu in nearly three years with Barça.

At the top of the table, Deportivo La Coruna hung on to their lead, though without a great deal of conviction. A 2-0 home win over Valencia – who had Champions League concerns uppermost in their minds – kept them ahead of the pack. But a 2-1 defeat in Barcelona the following weekend enabled the pursuers to start reeling them in.

Barcelona won with first-half goals from Patrick Kluivert and Rivaldo. One long-range effort from Romero and Flavio Conceicao's deflected shot seconds after the interval were the extent of La Coruna's attacking efforts.

Depor remained two points clear, but Barcelona were establishing themselves as title favourites.

As Kluivert said: "We have nine games in which to cut Depor's two-point lead and they are seriously wounded after losing to us here."

Barcelona's case was helped when the Madrid derby ended in a 1-1 draw.

"Real were lucky," said Atletico's old/new coach Radomir Antic. "We had seven good chances in the first half, they scored with their first shot."

Antic has been recalled by Atletico for a third time on a 16-month contract. He succeeded Italian Claudio Ranieri, who quit with the club fourth from bottom.

Antic coached Atletico to the League and Cup double in 1996 before being sacked to make way for Arrigo Sacchi. He returned in February 1999 but was then sacked for a second time four months later to make way for Ranieri.

"This is a new start for everyone," said Antic, who had been a regular spectator at Atletico matches. "But the support I've received already has been impressive. I'm sure that if we all pull together we can turn things around."

If only Real could be as confident about life with Anelka.

Pro-file Djalminha

Brazilian trickster aiming for the championship

THERE are many reasons why Deportivo La Coruna could be on the verge of winning their first Spanish League title. The astute management of Javier Irureta, for example, the acrobatic goalkeeping of Jacques Songo'o, the craft of veteran captain Fran, and Roy Makaay's goals.

One man who should not be overlooked, though, is midfield magician Djalminha, in the best form of his career at 29. He has replaced Rivaldo as the idol of the Riazor faithful since 1997, thanks to his moments of fantasy, his spectacular shuffles, his swaggering penalties – reminiscent of vintage 1976 Panenka – and his breathtaking free-kicks.

Not that Depor fans are always impressed. Far from it. They are often disappointed with Djalminha's regular losses of self-control, such as his ridiculous sending-off against Celta Vigo in a tense Galician derby in December.

After his red card against Arsenal at Highbury, Irureta was furious. A few hours later, however, on returning to La Coruna, the coach reflected that "this is what he is like. I shouldn't get too angry with him because he's given us many points this season with his moments of inspiration."

Djalminha's laid-back, lazy approach to the game has not endeared him to many coaches. He failed to hold a regular place at Flamengo and Guarani, then did not always impress with Shimizu S-Pulse in Japan. His career took off only when coach Wanderley Luxemburgo bought him for Palmeiras, then linked him with Rivaldo in the heart of what was surely the most attractive Brazilian club side of the 1990s.

His magnificent form for Palmeiras earned him 11 Brazilian caps under Mario Zagallo, and in 1997 Deportivo tried to rebuild the Djalminha-Rivaldo connection. By the time Djalminha – son of 1960s star Djalma Dias – had arrived in La Coruna, however, Rivaldo had been controversially signed by Barcelona, annoyed at losing Ronaldo to Inter.

Superlative ball skills and a repertoire of tricks quickly gave Djalminha the leading role at Riazor. This season he has been an even more important and influential figure, with Fran injured until December.

He says: "I'm enjoying my football as much as I ever have. I just hope that I can help Depor to win the League. That's become something of an obsession here after what happened in 1994, when the title was snatched away on the very last day."

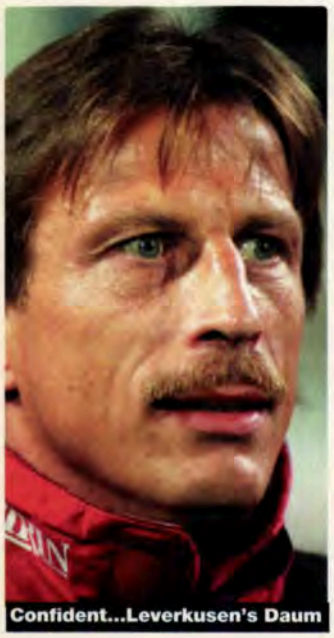
Duncan Shaw

Fact file

Club Deportivo La Coruna (Spa)
Country Brazil
Born December 12, 1978, in Santos
Previous clubs Flamengo, Guarani, Shimizu S-Pulse (Jap), Palmeiras
International caps 11

GERMANY

Leverkusen let rip


Confident...Leverkusen's Daum

THE strains and stresses of simultaneous high-pressure involvement in the Champions League and domestic championship are beginning to tell on Bayern Munich.

As they began dropping 'silly' points in the Bundesliga, so Europe-free Bayer Leverkusen pulled level at the top of the table.

Confirmation by Leverkusen coach Christoph Daum that he intended to stick with the club despite lucrative offers from elsewhere in Germany, as well as Turkey's Fenerbahce, fuelled the belief that Bayer may well go on to win the title for the first time.

Evidence of increasing confidence within the Leverkusen camp was there in abundance as they claimed a club record victory by thrashing Ulm 9-1. Brazilians Emerson and Ze Roberto each scored twice, and their midfield magic was responsible for creating all the other five goals.

That put Leverkusen joint equal on points at the top, Bayern having a slightly better goal difference. But that will be of little advantage unless the champions' coach, Ottmar Hitzfeld, can work some wonders with his team's fitness.

A sign of his concern was that he left virtually the entire first team at home for the concluding second phase Champions League tie against Dynamo in Kyiv.

Bayern could afford to do that because they were already certain of topping the group. But it offered a tacky reflection on both the revamped Champions League and the club, in their centenary year.

Bayern had set the anniversary celebrations under way at the end of February by thumping Eintracht Frankfurt 4-1 to maintain what was then a five-point lead at the top over Leverkusen. Alexander Zickler scored once in each half, Brazilian midfielder Paulo Sergio converted a penalty and compatriot Giovane Elber wrapped it up five minutes from time.

If Bayern do surrender the German crown to Leverkusen, the pivotal moment may be seen as the day Stuttgart spoiled Lothar Matthaus's farewell party by inflicting a 2-0 defeat on the champions.

Matthaus, playing his 464th and last Bundesliga match before moving to New York/New Jersey MetroStars, conceded the free-kick from which Krassimir Balakov opened the scoring.

A 4-1 win over Schalke kept Bayern two points ahead, but a week later they were held 1-1 by Hertha Berlin while Leverkusen were demolishing Ulm. Suddenly everything was up for grabs.

FRANCE

Inspiring shows for no reward

ALTHOUGH a French team will not win this year's Champions Cup – one so rarely does – at least Bordeaux and Marseille put up inspiring shows against English opposition.

Who could have grudged Marseille qualification, or at least a couple of victories against Chelsea instead of one and a far from deserved defeat?

It was hard to gainsay their recently appointed manager and former star player, Bernard Casoni, when he said after the match at Stamford Bridge that his side deserved at least a draw, and that had they equalised, they might well have won.

In Marseille they did win, even if the goal scored early on by Robert Pires was something of a freak and owed much to the odd positioning of Chelsea goalkeeper Ed De Goey.

Bordeaux, destined to win 2-0 at Marseille the following weekend, gave Manchester United an excellent run for their money in the Gironde, though they too were materially helped by a freakish early goal, when Raimond Van der Gouw palmed what seemed a harmless long shot into his own goal.

For Marseille, inconsistency is the name of the game in a season during which they have lost their volatile but talented and experienced coach, the ever-controversial Rolland Courbis.

They paid Lens the highest fee ever for an inter-French club transfer when they acquired that fine midfielder Stephane Dalmat. He showed his qualities in the second half away to Chelsea.

Operating on the left is not really Dalmat's speciality or scene but he has been philosophical about it. "Seeing the actual situation," said Dalmat, still barely 21, "you have to put yourself at the service of the team before everything. Your personal states of mind must be left in the dressing-room."

He says he is not yet ready to play abroad, and needs more time in France before thinking of it. He admits that he, like his team, has been inconsistent, putting it down to youth and inexperience. "Sometimes, you bring off a very good performance, and then, next match, you unconsciously relax. You tell yourself that by making less effort, you will do just as well. And then, no."

Casoni, he says, has brought a more rigorous approach to the team, but that is "no reason for casting stones at Courbis. Last season Marseille came close to the title, no? During the last six months, there were internal tensions with the president, he couldn't concentrate sufficiently on his job as coach. Obviously we felt that. Everyone appreciated him, and we fought to keep him here. But the club directorate took its decision."

What, meanwhile, of the unhappy Djibril Diawara, the Franco-Senegalese this season signed by Torino, who suffered a broken nose, expulsion, insults by the opposing manager, and eventually four weeks' suspension? Bari were fined £10,000 for the racist abuse hurled by their fans, but it was of scant consolation to Diawara.

"During the game," he says, "I received a blow on the nose from an elbow from their number three, Del Grosso. That upset me. The referee didn't see it, and the linesman didn't signal. At the end I went to see the Bari captain, Garzja, to ask him why his friend did not apologise. Garzja asked me: 'What do you want, bastard.' I replied: 'It's you who are the bastard,' spluttering, because I had a mouthful of blood. He struck me, I kicked him. Afterwards their manager made racist remarks about me."

When he had the ball, Diawara says, the crowd made monkey noises and chanted at him: "Nigger, go back to the jungle." That did not worry him, he says; he knew what the black Parma and Lazio players had to go through. "It was when I went to see the captain that everything started."

The weekend that Emerson and Ze Roberto ran riot was one dominated by South American imports in general. Argentina's Rodolfo Cardoso scored both Hamburg's goals in a 2-0 win in Freiburg, and Brazilian Alex Alves scored Hertha's goal against Bayern.

Both Cardoso's goals came from 20-yard free-kicks, and they put Hamburg back on track to join Bayern and Leverkusen in the Champions League next season.

Hamburg were third in the table with 45 points, and coach Frank Pagelsdorf said he expected that another 10 would be enough to ensure a place among Europe's elite next term.

The 1997 Champions League winners, Borussia Dortmund, are forgetting all about Europe. Fighting the drop became their priority after a 3-1 defeat at home to bottom club Arminia Bielefeld.

General manager Michael Zorc, skipper of the 1997 team, said: "Now the struggle against relegation has begun in earnest."

Below them, the dogfight has been enlivened by the improvement of Eintracht Frankfurt under new coach Felix Magath. Much of the credit on the pitch is down to 27-year-old midfielder Marco Gebhardt, who has done more than any other single player to suggest that the former UEFA Cup-winners can stay up.

His goal and man-of-the-match contribution to a surprise win in Stuttgart took Frankfurt's points tally to 13 from seven games. Gebhardt's reward was to be called up for Germany's B international against Russia in Offenbach.

He might even find a way into the senior squad for the European Championship, such is the level of confusion shown by the public squabbling over selection and tactics between national coach Erich Ribbeck, assistant Uli Stielike and senior players such as Matthaus and Oliver Kahn.

Keir Radnedge

Staying in France...Dalmat

What seems to have upset him even more and made him want to return to France were the insults rained on Parma's black Frenchman, Saliou Lassissi, "every time that he touched the ball".

Bari coach Eugenio Fascetti has had the grace to apologise publicly for his coarse remarks, but a repugnant impression has hardly been alleviated.

"I'll forget all that," says Diawara, nobly, "but not all at once. It will take time." Inevitably.

And what of the ever-intransigent, ever-impulsive, suspended and heavily fined Nicolas Anelka? You can hardly blame long-suffering Real Madrid president Lorenzo Sanz for declaring there must be something psychologically wrong with him. Hardly had he scored against Barcelona and declared how happy he now was in Madrid than he skipped training three days in a row, with the weak excuse that he did not approve of the tactics imposed by the coach, Vicente Del Bosque. Only to do another U turn and say that all is now serene and that he's prepared to return to the fold.

The £23million Real paid Arsenal for him looks more and more wildly excessive.

Andre Duclos

Pro-file Zoltan Sebescen

Reputation restored after disastrous Germany debut

YOUNG Wolfsburg midfielder Zoltan Sebescen is out to prove that a horror show of an international debut need not necessarily mean sporting oblivion.

Sebescen, born in Stuttgart to Hungarian parents, will certainly not spend his dotage looking back with fondness on the evening in February when he made his bow for the *Nationalmannschaft* in a 2-1 friendly defeat by Holland in Amsterdam.

At fault for both Dutch goals and generally a lost soul on the right-side of midfield, Sebescen was substituted after an hour and later received a terrible battering at the hands of an unforgiving German media.

The debutant was left bloodied and bruised by his introduction to international football. But to his credit, he has not faded away. Indeed, just over a week later, he produced a stunning one-man show as Wolfsburg drew 4-4 in the Bundesliga with high-flying Hamburg. It was a night when Sebescen could do no wrong. Not only did he score a wonderful hat-trick – a pair of bullet headers and a screaming drive from outside the box – but he also set up a goal for the Pole Andrzej Juskowiak.

"I was determined not to allow the criticism to get me down," said the 24-year-old. "I wanted to answer all those who attacked me with good performances on the pitch, and that's what I did in the Hamburg game.

"In football you must accept both the good and the bad. I've had both this season. I've had lots of compliments for my form at Wolfsburg and became a target after Germany lost to Holland. When things go badly, the only thing to do is to put your head down and work your way through the difficulties."

Arguably, too much too soon was expected of a player of Sebescen's inexperience. After all, he has only been a Bundesliga player for a few months, joining Wolfsburg from Second Division Stuttgart Kickers for £300,000 last June.

"Zoltan has had a meteoric rise," says Wolfsburg boss Wolfgang Wolf, an expert on Sebescen since he was his youth coach at Stuttgart Kickers.

"One moment he's playing in the Second Division; the next he's hailed as a Bundesliga star and picked for the German B and senior teams. He's come a long way in a very short space of time and people have to be patient with him. He still has a lot to learn and especially needs to work on the defensive side of his game.

"I hope that all the discussion about his selection for the national team is now at an end and he can settle down again. He has adapted to the Bundesliga particularly well and has proved he has an enormous amount of potential. It must not be wasted."

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Wolfsburg
Country Germany
Born October 10, 1975, in Stuttgart
Previous club Stuttgart Kickers
International debut February 2000, v Holland
International caps 1 (0 goals)

Two for foes to fear

Luke Nicoli reports on an attacking duo with plenty of international promise

Power and glory...new Liverpool signing Heskey impressed against Argentina

ALAN SHEARER'S announcement that he will retire from international football after Euro 2000 – "to spend more time with my family" – has left national coach Kevin Keegan with the job of finding a replacement striker.

Liverpool's Michael Owen will fill one of the centre-forward berths for the foreseeable future, but finding a partner will prove a much greater challenge.

Anfield team-mate Robbie Fowler is an obvious contender, although injury and disciplinary problems have hampered his progress. But Keegan holds two relatively unknown aces, both likely to figure at some point in this summer's European finals.

Sunderland striker Kevin Phillips is currently the Premiership's top scorer, while Emile Heskey's pace and power at Leicester City prompted Liverpool's Gerard Houllier to pay £11million for him.

Phillips, 26, has had an unusual rise to the top. Just over five years ago he was stacking shelves in a bread factory, while playing for non-league Baldock Town. Today, he is one of the most celebrated players in Sunderland's history, having scored 110 goals in only 173 games.

The forward made his England debut a year ago while still a First Division player, in a friendly against Hungary, and now has three caps to his name.

"I want to be a part of the England squad this summer and if I can keep scoring goals for Sunderland then I'll have a chance," he says. "To think that at the time of the last European Championship, I was desperately trying to make a name at Watford."

However, Phillips' England career has been hampered by injury. A torn hamstring in an end-of-season friendly against Liverpool last year left him wondering whether he'd ever get another chance under Keegan. Within hours, however, the England coach was on the phone assuring Phillips that he was still a big part of his plans.

"Keegan invited me down to get treatment from the England physios and meet the players again. I even walked down the tunnel for the game against Sweden [last June] and afterwards Kevin told me to keep scoring and he would keep picking me."

Both have kept to the bargain. Phillips has drummed fear into opposing defences in the Premiership, while Keegan picked him for the friendlies against Belgium last October and, as a sub, against Argentina in February.

"Argentina are a quality side and I thought that given a bit longer, I might have made more of an impact," says Phillips. "You don't get as many chances to score in internationals as you do in the Premiership, but I know I've the ability to play at this level."

Confidence personified, that – and it's a trait 22-year-old Heskey also has in abundance. Where Phillips can class himself as prolific, the robust Heskey is more likely to unsettle defenders than to get a goal. His powerful qualities impressed Gerard Houllier enough for Liverpool to pay a club record fee to sign him from Leicester last month.

Heskey's strong running and all-round power in the game against Argentina almost certainly booked his place in Keegan's squad this summer, and he believes he can give the coach a different option.

"The competition for places is very tough but although I don't score as many goals as the other guys, maybe I can bring other things to the side," he says. "One of the reasons I joined Liverpool was to play alongside Michael Owen. We have been successful for the Under-21 side and it could work out for us with England, too.

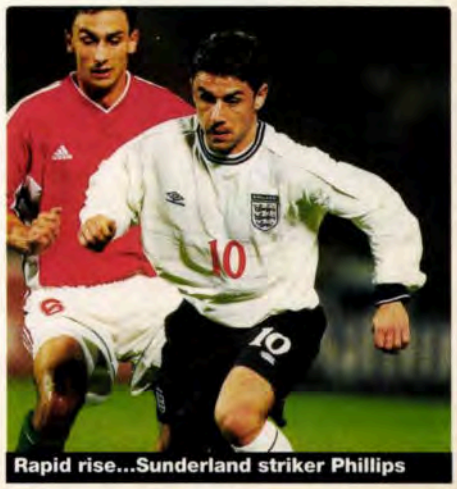
"I've proved that I can play at the highest club level, and we'll just have to wait and see if I can repeat it for England. I did well against Argentina and could have scored – so if I can do it against a team like that, I know that I have the capability to be an England regular."

One of Heskey's last games for Leicester before his big-money move to Liverpool was the League Cup Final, in which Leicester triumphed 2-1 over First Division Tranmere, managed by former Liverpool and Republic of Ireland striker John Aldridge.

Tranmere's run owed a lot to Aldridge's man-management skills, but also to Dave Challinor's extra-long throw-ins. The aerial bombardment from the defender caused all sorts of problems for Premiership sides Coventry and Middlesbrough, two of Tranmere's scalps en route to the Final.

Danny Wilson paid the price for Sheffield Wednesday's terrible season when he was sacked as manager with nine League matches remaining.

The standings at the top and bottom of the Premiership seem to already be settled. Manchester United, comfortably ahead of Leeds and Liverpool, have mastered the art of playing badly and still winning, while bottom-placed Watford, Wednesday and Bradford appear doomed.


Rapid rise...Sunderland striker Phillips

Back at Celtic...Tommy Burns

SCOTLAND

Burns returns to an even tougher task

RELENTLESS Rangers, surging towards a second successive domestic title under Dick Advocaat, continued to gain momentum with a single-goal victory over Celtic at Parkhead in the third Old Firm derby of the season.

Rod Wallace scored towards the end of a game which had been largely dominated by Celtic to take Rangers a massive 12 points clear of their city rivals. Celtic will be pleased when they can draw the curtains on what has been a thoroughly miserable season.

Stand-in coach Kenny Dalglish, who at first appeared quite reluctant to fill the vacancy created by the dismissal of John Barnes, remained defiant and insisted that the championship was still attainable.

Supporters, however, are painfully aware of their team's shortcomings and are anxious to see evidence of positive leadership following a succession of coaches in recent times.

Dalglish has reintroduced former manager Tommy Burns to the club as first-team coach and many would be happy if he were to be offered the job on a permanent basis, bearing in mind his undoubted commitment to the Celtic cause.

The potential Burns displayed when last in charge was stifled following an acrimonious fall-out with then chairman Fergus McCann, which led to Burns's resignation.

Rangers have announced a £10m cash injection from entrepreneur Tom Hunter. This is expected to provide a catalyst for the club, who are still keen on the proposed Atlantic League.

Alan Fairley

WALES

Lido's Cup win creates waves

THE WELSH Cup quarter-finals produced one minor shock as 12th-placed Afan Lido beat championship contenders Llanelli 3-1 after extra time, and now face Bangor City in the semi-finals on April 15.

City took care of third-level Caerleon, beating them 4-1 at home.

Reigning League champions Barry Town moved into the semis with a 5-0 home win over another third-level side, CPD Penrhyncoch, and now face eternal rivals Cwmbran Town. They beat Carmarthen Town 3-2 after being two down.

In the League, Barry look to be on their way to a fifth consecutive title as the chasing pack take points off each other. Total Network Solutions are now their closest challengers, five points behind with a game in hand.

Caernarfon Town look doomed, without a win in 21 games. New manager Dixie McNeil has a tough run-in to contend with, too. Conwy United also are in danger.

Mel Thomas

N. IRELAND

Linfield lose at last

RUNAWAY League leaders Linfield finally were beaten in a championship match when Glenavon inflicted their first defeat since August, 25 games ago.

Glenavon shocked the champions-in-waiting with a 3-0 victory at Mourneview Park, a result that certainly was a boost for Roy Walker's men. Players' wages have now been cut twice this season at Glenavon.

They, Glentoran, Coleraine and much-improved Portadown continue to battle for second spot and a place in the UEFA Cup next season.

Another defeat for Linfield, against Glentoran, indicates a dip in form, but it has come too late to hinder their chances of winning the League. However, they were fortunate to retain an interest in the Irish Cup, scraping through after a replay against Dungannon Swifts. Linfield now face Glentoran in the semis, while Portadown play Coleraine.

Sammy McIlroy's spell as manager of the national side began with a 3-1 win over Luxembourg, with two-goal striker David Healy earning much praise on his senior debut.

Roy Kitson

Pro-file Thierry Henry

Man in the middle for UEFA Cup hopefuls Arsenal

THIERRY HENRY'S successful conversion into a central striker this season is not only good news for his club, Arsenal; it's a potential godsend for a French national team in desperate need of a considerably sharper cutting edge.

Before arriving in the Premiership this season, Henry had been almost exclusively used by Monaco, Juventus and France on the right flank. And while he was his country's top scorer in the 1998 World Cup, he had never proved a sharp finisher at club level – only 20 goals to his name in four-and-a-half seasons for Monaco and on the scoresheet just three times after transferring to Juve in January 1999.

The conventional wisdom was that Henry's searing pace and willingness to run at defenders were best employed on the wing. Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger, however, had other ideas for his new signing.

"To my mind, Thierry will be more of a threat through the middle," said Wenger. "I'm convinced of his ability to play in this new position. Because of his speed and physical power, he can be a real threat there."

With Henry in wasteful mode in front of goal in the early stages of the campaign, Wenger's reasoning initially looked anything but inspired. But then came the breakthrough. In mid-September, Henry opened his Arsenal account with a spectacular long-range winner at Southampton, and from that moment on the goals have flowed – 14 in all competitions by mid-March made him Arsenal's leading marksman.

"Obviously my first goal for Arsenal at Southampton was the most important," says Henry. "Up until that game I'd missed a lot of chances and it was beginning to worry me. Breaking my duck for Arsenal settled me down, but I know I must continue to work hard.

"I never really settled at Juventus and when Arsenal came in for me in the close season, it was an opportunity I had to seize.

"I love the game in England. It's so quick and exciting and the supporters really get behind their team. It's a good feeling.

"Arsene Wenger was my first coach at Monaco and gave me my chance in their first team. He knows everything about my game and under him I'm bound to improve in all aspects."

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Arsenal (Eng)
Country France
Born August 17, 1977, in Les Ulis, Paris
Previous clubs Monaco, Juventus (Ita)
International debut October 1997, v South Africa
International caps 11 (3 goals)
Honours World Cup 1998; European Youth Championship 1996; French League 1997

Trossero takes charge

Ivar von Rulach on the appointment of a new national coach

SWITZERLAND

ENZO TROSSERO is back in Swiss football – as national team coach. The 47-year-old Argentinian has agreed a two-year deal with his priority to steer the team to the finals of the 2002 World Cup.

Trossero, who has a contract until June with Independiente of Buenos Aires, guided Sion to the Cup in 1991 and the League title in 1992. A later spell at Lugano ended prematurely when the club's new Italian owners put in their own man.

Swiss football followers are eagerly awaiting a confrontation with national team captain Ciriaco Sforza, who has criticised Trossero in the past. Sforza, fancying himself as a king-maker, was orchestrating a campaign to get interim trainer Hanspeter Zaugg confirmed in the post, after earlier promoting the return of Roy Hodgson.

Trossero, a rigid disciplinarian who brooks no opposition from his players, hinted that Sforza could well be demoted or even dropped. "I was really upset at his remarks," said the coach. "We have never even met. He owes me an explanation if and when we do."

Grasshopper's bid to reduce St Gallen's six-point advantage came unstuck when the clubs met in the first round of the championship play-offs. The Zurich club looked set for a runaway victory when they went three up in 14 minutes, but the visitors rallied brilliantly to pull it back to 3-3. A 90th-minute goal by Ricardo Cabanas put Grasshopper 4-3 ahead but St Gallen were not to be denied, and Ghanaian Charles Amoah scored his second goal in injury time, taking his season's total to 18.

Grasshopper coach Hodgson was understandably livid at the wasted opportunities. He locked himself in his office to compose himself before venturing out for the post-match interviews. "This was not a draw but a defeat," he said. "We beat ourselves."

Barely a week earlier Basle had eliminated Grasshopper from the Swiss Cup, going through 5-4 on penalties following a 1-1 draw. However, midfielder Murat Yakin's first full appearance for Basle ended inauspiciously when he was booked for a crude foul. FIFA had stepped in to allow him to play for the club until he moves to Kaiserslautern in June, when his contract with Fenerbahce ends.

● FC VADUZ were held to a goalless draw by mid-table Schwamendingen when the **LIECHTENSTEIN** season restarted after the winter break, *writes Graeme Crawford.* However, they still head the table with 32 points, two clear of Red Star and three in front of Young Fellows Juventus. Eschen Mauren are still bottom, a point behind Wulfingfen.

Hard taskmaster...Enzo Trossero

HOLLAND

Wouters out - after 100 years

JAN WOUTERS paid the price for a string of poor results when he was sacked by Ajax two days after the club celebrated their centenary.

Ajax had dropped to fifth in the table after a 1-0 home defeat by Twente Enschede. Youth coach Hans Westerhof will take over until the end of the season, when he is set to join Willem II.

Ajax, four times European champions, are out of both the UEFA Cup and Dutch Cup and have no chance of winning the championship.

PSV will not have much trouble claiming the title. But retaining it could prove problematic after their star forwards, Luc Nilis and Ruud Van Nistelrooy, who have scored more than 40 goals between them this season, announced that they are leaving in the summer.

Nilis, 32, has signed a contract with Aston Villa, and will be followed to England by 23-year-old Van Nistelrooy. His new club, probably Arsenal or Chelsea, will have to pay around £22million to sign him. PSV's task is to line up replacements, with Vitesse Arnhem's Pierre Van Hooijdonk and Norwegians John Carew and Tore Andre Flo all in the running.

If PSV decide to buy Van Hooijdonk it could help ease Vitesse's financial difficulties. Their main sponsor, Nuon, has taken over the £17m debt to prevent the club being declared bankrupt.

Johan Neeskens, Frank Rijkaard's assistant with the national team, will take charge at NEC Nijmegen as soon as Euro 2000 is over.

Martin Koopman was fired at bottom club Den Bosch and replaced by Mark Wotte, who was due to take over next season anyway. Wotte, in turn, resigned at Utrecht and will be replaced by Frans Adelaar.

Finally, Henk Duut, assistant coach at Fortuna Sittard, will succeed Feyenoord-bound Bert Van Marwijk next season.

Klaas-Jan Droppert

Off to Villa...Luc Nilis

BELGIUM

'Indefensible' referee is asked back

IF Amand Ancion was not already the most celebrated figure among Belgian referees, he certainly is now.

Ancion, who announced that he was quitting after incorrectly disallowing a Mouscron goal for offside, is bowing to pressure to return. The Belgian Referees Association was so alarmed at the prospect of losing its top man that he was asked to change his mind.

"I am indefensible," he had said after rejecting Mouscron claims for a valid goal by Axel Lawaree, scored when injured Charleroi defender Enzo Biondo was on the ground playing him onside.

Mouscron won the game 2-1 but Charleroi continued to make the headlines when they sacked coach Raymond Mommens after only five months. His successor is Spaniard Manu Ferrera, who had been Anderlecht's youth team coach.

The managerial merry-go-ground is well and truly under way.

Club Brugge, who will be lucky to qualify for Europe if their slump continues, have told Rene Verheyen that he will have to make way at the end of the season for Trond Sollied, the Norwegian who was largely responsible for Rosenborg's emergence as a force in Europe before he moved to Belgium.

This left Gent looking for a new coach. They went for Dutchman Hank Houwarte, which means that Harelbeke will need to make another appointment.

Anderlecht, meanwhile, continue to set the pace in the League, taking coach Aime Anthuenis ever closer to his second successive title with different clubs.

A run of five victories took them 10 points clear. The last of these was against near-neighbours Alost, who were forced to abandon their idea of

On his way...Rene Verheyen

a merger with Lokeren – proposed by the respective chairmen – when both sets of supporters expressed furious objections.

Nicholas Harling

● THIRD DIVISION Muhulenbach caused the surprise of the **LUXEMBOURG** Cup when beating F91 Dudelange, who are in the hunt for the League title.

Muhulenbach won 5-3 on penalties after a 1-1 draw to reach the quarter-finals.

In the League, Grevenmacher still lead from Jeunesse. Union sacked coach Gilbert Neumann because of poor results, and are bringing in Feno Braun as his replacement.

Tim Brice

PORTUGAL

Sporting shock for Porto

GOALS by Brazil's Andre Cruz and Argentina's Alberto Costa enabled Sporting Lisbon to take over from Porto at the top of the table.

A full house at Sporting's Alvalade stadium roared the home club to a victory that threatens Porto's bid for a sixth successive title.

The result left the champions with 57 points, one behind Sporting, with Benfica third on 51.

Defeat and a red card for coach Fernando Santos, who protested too loudly for too long, completed a bad four-day spell for Porto. In midweek they had led 2-0 against Sparta Prague in the Champions League, only to be held 2-2.

German coach Jupp Heynckes has been given an easy ride since his arrival at Benfica, but recent events have led a section of the crowd to turn against him.

Two successive away games yielded only one point, a 1-1 draw at Boavista following a 3-0 defeat by Estrela Amadora.

Optimists point to the fact that Benfica still have to play Porto at home and Sporting away, but the more realistic are of the opinion that Heynckes will not finish his first season in Lisbon by celebrating a championship.

Alberto da Silva

REP IRELAND

Shels on Double trail

SHELBOURNE have never won the League-Cup double, but are favoured to do so this season.

With Cork City and St Patrick's Athletic fading badly in the championship, Bohemians are now the only serious challengers.

In the FAI Harp Lager Cup, Shels are through to the last four, to meet Galway United. In the other semi-final, holders Bray Wanderers face in-form Bohemians.

Meanwhile, Shels have done a deal with Manchester United, who will pay £50,000 a year to have first refusal on players coming through the newly established Reds Soccer School in Dublin. They will also provide coaching assistance and loan young players to Shels.

Dave Barry is stepping down as manager of Cork City at the end of the season.

Sean Creedon

Pro-file Mark Van Bommel

Midfield tough guy is one for the future

WHEN I asked PSV coach Eric Gerets to name some of the players who had stood out for the club in the Champions League this season, he not surprisingly mentioned Luc Nilis and Ruud Van Nistelrooy. But he also nominated Mark Van Bommel – a remarkable choice, because this rugged midfielder is only 22 and had been at the club just a few months.

But Gerets knows a good player when he sees one. Although Van Bommel made his debut for Fortuna Sittard at 16, he had to wait until last year to make his breakthrough. Then, under the guidance of Bert Van Marwijk, his father-in-law, Van Bommel was outstanding in Fortuna's successful run. The club, so often fighting against relegation, rose to finish 10th in the League and reached the Cup Final by beating PSV 3-1 in the semis. That should have been one of Van Bommel's happiest moments, but he ended up in tears. "It was the biggest disappointment of my career," he says, "because I collected my second booking and knew I would be suspended for the Final."

Though Van Bommel was not in the spotlight during Fortuna's finest hour, his name already was familiar at Holland's top clubs. In the end he decided to go to PSV. "I come from the southern province of Limburg," he says. "In that part of the country it's only PSV that matter; Ajax are just like any other club. During a conversation with Eric Gerets I immediately got the feeling that PSV and I would fit."

The choice seems to have been right. At his new club Van Bommel forms a strong partnership with Johann Vogel. PSV are heading for the title and the forwards are not the only reason. Van Bommel's dominance in midfield, his passes, vision and tackling are other major factors. No wonder that many people are advising national coach Frank Rijkaard to give him a chance.

Hopefully he has learned from his mistakes. During a Champions League match against Bayern Munich, PSV won a free-kick and Van Bommel went to take it immediately. He was blocked by Lothar Matthaus and pushed him aside – an action which merited a red card when the German fell to the ground. "It was a stupid thing to do – especially if you know Matthaus' reputation," was Van Bommel's rueful comment.

Lack of experience will keep him out of the national team this summer, but he could still win a prize with the Olympic squad.

Whether or not that happens, Van Bommel is definitely one to watch. That old warhorse Gerets is rarely wrong.

Klaas-Jan Droppert

Fact file

Club PSV Eindhoven
Country Holland
Born April 22, 1977, in Maasbracht
Previous club Fortuna Sittard

Herfolge close in on title

DENMARK

Jim Holden on a great result for the village club

DENMARK'S Superliga season resumed with a shock result that left John Jensen's Herfolge even firmer favourites to win their first title.

Second-placed Brondby lost 3-2 at home to lowly Esbjerg in front of a capacity 16,000 crowd.

The defeat was a crushing blow to Brondby, who had warmed up for the second half of the campaign in confident style with a win against Norway's Rosenborg in a friendly in Spain.

The club's Norwegian coach, Aage Hareide, has brought in a number of his countrymen and a couple of Swedes to bolster the squad, the kind of move that can backfire in PR terms if results go sour.

It was ironic, therefore, that Esbjerg's last-minute winner should come from their Swedish midfielder Joakim Persson, acquired from IFK Gothenburg during the winter. He could not have had a more memorable debut.

Esbjerg's victory took them out of the relegation zone above AGF Aarhus, who have brought home Lennart Bak from Salernitana in Italy to help their survival hopes.

Draws for both Silkeborg and AaB also helped the cause of village club Herfolge.

Off the field there has been much politicking over the choice of a new chairman for the Danish FA. Current incumbent Poul Hyldgaard is to step down, and the scramble to succeed him involves a number of key men, from present deputy Henning R Jensen to widely respected general secretary Jim Stjerne Hansen, who has long been an influence in UEFA circles.

But both are being opposed by regional officials with vested interests and the battle for power could be protracted and messy.

Dream debut...Joakim Persson

SWEDEN

Penalty makes Magnus moan

A DUBIOUS penalty for Italy floored Sweden in their Palermo friendly, which had special interest because the teams will meet again in the European Championship in June.

The referee awarded the kick, converted by Alessandro Del Piero, believing that Sweden goalkeeper Magnus Hedman had fouled Francesco Totti.

But Hedman disputed the decision. "It was never a penalty," he said. "I did not even touch Totti."

Sweden began brightly and created a few good chances. "For the opening 30 minutes we dominated," said co-coach Tommy Soderberg. "But then we let Italy into the game by playing too many short passes."

Soderberg was well pleased by his back four, with skipper Patrik Andersson, still only a reserve at Bayern Munich, having an outstanding match.

During the second half, Sweden's attack was led by two Germany-based players, Jorgen Pettersson (Kaiserslautern) and Magnus Arvidsson (Hansa Rostock).

Arvidsson, now 27, was rejected by Helsingborgs in 1993, and spent five years in Sweden's lower divisions before Trelleborgs signed him in 1998. Last summer he joined Rostock, and has been their leading scorer this season.

Pentti Hietanen

FINLAND

Too hot for Antti's boys

COACH Antti Muurinen was pleased with his players' performances in the King's Cup in Thailand even though they lost 5-2 to the hosts in the Final.

"We played four matches within a week in very hot conditions that are

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so unfamiliar to our players," he said. "We were really tired in the Final, but that was quite understandable."

Finland fielded only Scandinavia-based players, apart from Auxerre midfielder Teemu Tainio.

"We now have a larger base of players from which to choose," said Muurinen. "Our resources still don't compare with leading countries, but there has been clear improvement in recent years."

Former Finnish international striker Ari Tegelberg was killed in a car crash at the age of 36. Tegelberg won 15 caps and scored 84 League goals for Rovaniemi and HJK Helsinki.

Pentti Hietanen

ICELAND

Girl power costs coach his job

ANYONE who thought girl power was something confined to the realms of the tabloid press has yet to experience Icelandic football.

When some members of the women's national side decided the time had come to part with coach Thordur Larusson, they voiced their opinion by threatening to withdraw their services. 'Foul!' cried the FA, which vowed to stand by its man, and did so for the few weeks Larusson took to decide that enough was enough.

He resigned with almost a year of his contract still to run, and is now involved with the FA's youth development programme.

The new coach is Logi Olafsson, currently at First Division FH. He took the national job only on condition that it would not interfere with his bid to steer his club into the top flight.

Former Iceland international Teitur Thordarson has been honoured by Estonian President Lenart Meri for services to the country's football. Thordarson, now coaching Norwegian club Brann Bergen, spent four years as coach of Flora Tallinn and the Estonian national side, during which he steered the country from 140th to 70th place in the FIFA world rankings.

Rab Christie

NORWAY

'Non-EU' vote causes a stir

A MARGIN of one vote meant that Norwegian clubs will continue to field only one player from outside the European Union next season.

The Norwegian FA annual meeting debated a proposal to increase the number of foreign players, but turned it down by the narrowest of margins.

Mamadou Diallo of Lillestrom, who comes from Senegal, immediately decided to leave Norway and try his luck in the United States, while Brann Bergen coach Teitur Thordarson was fuming because he can use only one of his several imports at a time.

FA president Per Omdal was "happy to see that the opportunities for Norwegian talents were not restricted by the fact that more foreign players could be brought to the country".

The prospect of Rosenborg again having to play two qualifying rounds in the Champions League next season has not gone down well. Though Rosenborg continue to dominate Norwegian soccer, the co-efficient for the country's clubs as a whole mean they do not qualify automatically for the group stage.

Rosenborg had a depressing European campaign this season, and were out of their depth in the second phase group.

Kjetil Rekdal was told by Hertha Berlin that they were not interested in extending his contract this summer

Back home...Kjetil Rekdal

and Valerenga were quick to sign him. For Rekdal, playing in Euro 2000 is all-important and he believes that he will benefit from playing in the Norwegian League instead of signing for another foreign club.

Former Brann striker Kjetil Lovvik did not have a successful period with Grasshopper in Switzerland and has been brought home on a loan deal by Second Division Lyn Oslo.

Sigurd Odegaard

Pro-file Marcus Allback

Loyal forward gunning for a Sweden place

WITH news of money-grabbing mercenaries dominating the headlines, it is pleasant to present a player who is still familiar with the meaning of the word loyalty.

After topping Sweden's scoring charts with 15 goals last season, Marcus Allback became a target for a host of foreign clubs, including Tottenham, Ipswich and Grasshopper.

Allback, however, chose to remain with unfashionable Orgryte.

He was destined to play in the red-and-blue colours of one of Sweden's oldest clubs. Allback's father, Stefan, is a club director and former player, and his Uncle Dan also turned out for the team.

Yet young Marcus took a relatively long time to make his mark, finally coming good in the 1997 season when he hit nine League goals. He then went on loan to Lyngby of Denmark over the winter months, after which there was a shock move to Bari, a club with a taste for Swedish stars. However, Allback spent six fruitless months in Italy, failing to score in his 16 outings.

A return to Sweden was on the cards, but though a number of clubs were keen to sign him, Allback again chose Orgryte.

His performances last season earned him an international debut against South Africa last November, and sidefooting the winner against Denmark at the La Manga tournament in February will have done his chances of making the Euro 2000 squad no harm.

"It is my dream to play in the European Championship," says Allback, "but let's not get carried away. The competition for places is hot. Kennet Andersson and Yksel Osmanovski are already in the team, and we must see if Henrik Larsson recovers."

Many Swedish experts believe that Allback could provide coaches Tommy Soderberg and Lars Lagerback with an option, not least because 'Mackan' is strong, a resolute penalty-box operator and has a cool finish.

Orgryte, a club with a great tradition, have struggled in recent times. With luck, Marcus Allback could become their most famous forward since Agne Simonsson, who scored in the 1958 World Cup Final.

"I love it here," says Allback. "But I won't rule out a chance to try my luck in Europe again. I've rejected a couple of bids, but perhaps the best offer is yet to come."

Pentti Hietanen

Fact file

Club Orgryte
Country Sweden
Born July 5, 1973, in Gothenburg
Previous club Bari (Ita)
International debut November 1999, v South Africa
International caps 3 (1 goal)

Fans injured in firebomb attack

Lou Economopoulos on a volatile double-header

Among the goals...Giorgos Giorgiadis got two against Austria

GREECE

FOUR fans of AEK Athens were injured when Olympiakos supporters threw a firebomb at their coach as they travelled to watch a Greek Cup quarter-final second leg in the Olympic stadium. The coach, bringing the fans from Patras, just outside Athens, was set ablaze in the attack, which happened as it approached the ground.

The game itself ended in a 3-0 win for AEK, which made the aggregate score 4-1. They were joined in the semi-finals by Kalamata, Ionikos Nikea and Panionios Nea Smyrni.

Some 2,000 police kept the peace inside the ground for a match watched by 65,000 spectators – but more violence erupted later when around 200 Olympiakos fans, angered by their side's poor performance, caused thousands of pounds-worth of damage to players' cars parked at the training ground.

The sides clashed again a few days later, this time in the League, and Olympiakos maintained their three-point lead at the top of the table by reversing the 3-0 margin of their Cup defeat. Second-placed Panathinaikos kept up the pressure by winning 3-1 at Iraklis.

Giorgos Giorgiadis, of PAOK Salonika, scored twice as the national team eased to a comfortable 4-1 win over Austria in their recent friendly.

ISRAEL

Tikva join title hunt

THERE was a new twist to the battle at the top when leaders Hapoel Tel Aviv and highly fancied challengers Maccabi Haifa drew 1-1.

The pair have dominated for most of the season, but lately shown a tendency to throw away vital points and repeatedly fail to take advantage of the other's slips.

They finally paid the price when Hapoel Petah Tikva crept between them to take second place, their 4-2 victory over lowly Maccabi Netanya turning the title race into a three-club contest.

Israel's new national coach, Richard Moller Nielsen, got off to a dream start with a 4-1 home victory against Russia, one of the heaviest defeats in their opponents' history. Walid Badir scored twice, while Kfir Udi marked his debut with another of the goals.

Moller Nielsen had stressed the need for his new team to avoid making costly mistakes, and the renewed confidence at the back proved to be the springboard for success up front as the Israelis began the task of erasing the painful memories of their Euro 2000 exit.

Derek Fattal

YUGOSLAVIA

The Obilic crisis continues

AFTER replacing their coach for the fourth time this season – and winning 1-0 away to title-holders Partizan – you might have thought that the crisis at Obilic Belgrade was over. Not so.

In their next match, Obilic suffered a sensational 1-0 home defeat by Cukaricki, a club in the middle of the relegation battle. What's more, Partizan took over the League leadership with a thumping 7-0 win away to Mogren, while Red Star closed to within a point of Obilic by winning 1-0 at home to Radnicki Kragujevac.

Yugoslav fans have a simple explanation for Obilic's struggles of late: after the death of rebel leader Arkan, who owned the club, referees and opponents are able to operate without undue pressure being brought to bear on them.

Higher attendances are another result of Arkan's absence from the scene. Matches that last year attracted between 100 and 1,000

Great start...Israel's Kfir Udi

spectators now have 5,000 and often more. Whether that has come as a result of the fans' faith in the future, or is due only to a hunger for football after the long winter break, only time will tell.

Vladimir Novak

TURKEY

Denizli's choice causes confusion

NATIONAL COACH Mustafa Denizli's selection for Turkey's first match of the year, against Norway, puzzled many supporters.

He had been expected to try out a number of newcomers, but the team remained largely unchanged from the one that qualified for Euro 2000.

Not in playing style, however. The defence rocked, the midfield seemed to lack concentration, and even star striker Hakan Sukur looked indifferent. In the circumstances, the home crowd found little to cheer, and Norway cruised to a 2-0 victory.

Denizli insisted that the result was not important, and that it had given him the chance to see where there were problems while there was still time to do something about them.

Galatasaray put Borussia Dortmund out of the UEFA Cup and seemed sure to progress to the last four when beating Mallorca 4-1 away in the first leg of the quarter-final. They also went on a seven-game winning streak in the League which put them 11 points clear at the top of the table.

The new coach of second-placed Besiktas, Hans-Peter Briegel, is hoping to earn a Champions League place in his first season in charge, and after 24 rounds they were nine points clear of Fenerbahce in third.

Fener's cause was not helped when they lost 5-1 to fourth-placed Gaziantepspor after having Bolic, Mosheou and Kamalettin sent off.

Hasan Cemali

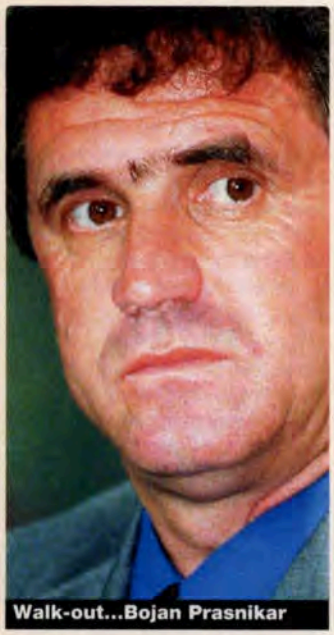
SLOVENIA

Top coach quits

THE shock of the season came when Bojan Prasnikar resigned as coach of Maribor Teatanic – with his club seven points ahead in the race for a fourth successive championship.

Prasnikar quit after a poor spell of a mere three matches: a 2-1 defeat away to third-placed HIT Gorica, a 0-0 home draw with second-placed Olimpija, and a 3-0 loss in the Cup semi-final against Korotan Prevalje.

Within a few days the club had received 14 applications for the job from coaches in Slovenia, Croatia and Austria. Former Yugoslavian



Walk-out...Bojan Prasnikar

international goalkeeper Ivan Katalinic, recently sacked by Saudi Arabian club Jeddah, is the favourite.

Zdravko Reic

CROATIA

Bilic returns for title chase

SLAVEN BILIC, one of the most popular footballers to emerge from Croatia, has rejoined Hajduk Split to help them in the title run-in. Bilic is now 31 and by continuing to play runs the risk of suffering permanent disability after a string of injuries. He says he is willing to take the chance and is as highly regarded as ever, despite his seven years away from his homeland, in Germany and England.

Bilic will play only in the most important games, and on his return from Everton he started with one against Dinamo Zagreb, who would have gone four points clear at the top had they won.

Hajduk's 'old boy' injected new power into the team and their 0-0 draw was thoroughly deserved.

The result left Dinamo four points clear of their rivals with 11 games to go.

Zdravko Reic

MACEDONIA

Dragan spreads his net wide

NATIONAL coach Dragan Kanatlarovski is keen to watch as many eligible players as possible before the World Cup qualifiers start. He called on four debutants for the friendly against Yugoslavia in Skopje, and is likely to include several more in the Tehran Cup, a three-nation event also including Iran and Japan.

The game in Skopje was lost 2-1 – Macedonia's third defeat by Yugoslavia in only five months – but the home team deserved a draw, as Yugoslavia coach Vujadin Boskov admitted.

In the League, Sloga Jugomagnat are well on the way to another title and in with a chance of the Double. The quarter-final draw in the national Cup is: Pelister v Vardar, Sileks v Sloga, Rabotnicki v FCU, Makedonija v Pobeda.

Michel Stojmanovski

MALTA

Birkirkara top again

THE vital game between Birkirkara and Valletta ended in dramatic fashion with an equaliser in the 90th minute being followed by a winner in injury time.

Cutajar gave Birkirkara a half-time lead, but they then had key defender Spiteri sent off. Valletta's Giglio missed a second-half penalty, but with the game fading away, skipper Laferla equalised with a deflected shot. In the final minute, however, Birkirkara's Nwoko won a penalty, and Zammit converted to put his team top of the League again.

Domenico Aquilina

Pro-file Lambros Choutos

Home may be best after all for the Greek boy wonder

AFTER an extensive footballing education in Italy with Roma, Lambros Choutos has opted to go back to his home country in a bid to take his career onwards and upwards.

Choutos, a highly gifted Greek Under-21 attacker who is regarded as the Hellenic answer to David Beckham, had plenty of job offers to chew over at the turn of the year.

Verona – who were looking to take him on loan – Anderlecht and a number of Spanish clubs were keen on him. But ultimately Olympiakos won the day, paying Roma a reported £3.3million.

No matter that Choutos used to play as a schoolboy for Panathinaikos, the great rivals of Piraeus, and that 'Pana' midfielder Yorgos Karagounis is his best friend. Olympiakos were delighted to have scooped one of the brightest young talents in Greek soccer.

"I know Roma coach Fabio Capello thinks highly of Choutos and that's a wonderful recommendation in itself," said Olympiakos coach Albertino Bigon, a former Milan schemer who guided Napoli to the Serie A title in 1989-90. "The only reason he didn't have too many chances in the Roma first team was the presence of world-class players like Totti, Montella and Delvecchio.

"He is immensely talented, has picked up good footballing habits from his time in Italy, and he's still only 20, so he should turn out to be a great investment for this club."

Choutos is now tied to Olympiakos by a four-and-a-half-year contract said to be worth some £2.5m, so he too has every reason to feel good. "I'm very excited by my move to Olympiakos," he says. "Like me, they are full of ambition and I'm eager to help them achieve special things. I'm also hoping to break into the Greek side in time for the next World Cup."

Choutos was only 12 when his father Yorgos used his Italian business connections to set up a trial for him with Roma, and after sailing through the entrance examination, the boy made spectacular progress through the club's youth ranks.

Here was a kid seemingly heading for stardom. In 1994, he was the two-goal hero when Roma beat Ajax 2-1 in a junior match shown live on national television; a sportswear manufacturer offered him a boot deal at 15, and a year later he made his Serie A debut against Napoli, becoming the youngest-ever player in the Italian top flight.

But that was as good as it got. A succession of big-name signings meant that he would appear only twice more in the Roma first team, and now it's homeward bound for Choutos, the great Greek hope.

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Olympiakos
Country Greece
Born December 7, 1979, in Trikala
Previous clubs Panathinaikos, Roma (Ita)

Grey days for Grazer

Bob Vaughan on a damaging departure and derby defeat

AUSTRIA

THE DEPARTURE of coach Klaus Augenthaler to Germany is Nurnberg's gain and Grazer AK's loss. But at least GAK, whom Augenthaler led to third-place finishes in the League for the past two seasons, were generous in not standing in the German's way once his new club had made an offer. Augenthaler can now live at home and not commute between Bavaria and Styria, as he has had to do for the past couple of years.

His successor is Rainer Hoerl, whose reign began with an embarrassing defeat across town at Schwarzenegger Stadion, where Sturm completed a bad week for GAK by winning 6-1. Schopp, Schupp and Co were in fine form, and Ivica Vastic was on the spot with two of the goals.

On the same day as the Graz derby, Rapid's three-goal victory away to lowly Bregenz kept them in second place, while FC Tirol's 2-1 win at SV Ried maintained their one-point lead.

In Salzburg, 'birthday boy' Toni Polster's return in the game against Linz ASK attracted 11,000 fans but he was unable to celebrate a goal or a win. Their struggling opponents took the points, 2-1, to ease their relegation worries.

Derby double...Sturm's Ivica Vastic

Trouble brewing...Juskowiak

POLAND

Engel experiments taking time to work

NEW NATIONAL coach Jerzy Engel lost his second successive game when Poland lost 1-0 to France in Paris, following their 3-0 defeat against Spain.

The goal did not arrive until the 88th minute, from Zidane, but Poland did not deserve anything better.

Engel is still looking for a first-choice 11, having tested 28 players in his first two games.

Andrzej Juskowiak of Wolfsburg, who was left out of the Poland squad, was quoted in a German newspaper as saying that "the whole of Poland is laughing at Engel". He later claimed that "somebody had coloured his words" – but he may face disciplinary action from the Polish FA.

In the League, Polonia Warsaw moved to the top, with 40 points, after four successive wins at the start of the second half of the season. Ruch Chorzow were second, one point behind and five ahead of Legia.

Dariusz Kurowski

RUSSIA

Romantsev talked out of quitting

MEMORIES of Russia's failure to qualify for Euro 2000 were revived by a 4-1 defeat by Israel in the first international match of the year.

Coach Oleg Romantsev offered to resign immediately after the match in Haifa, but the players persuaded him not to do so.

The team lack a strong defender and are short of strikers, while injured goalkeeper Alexander Filimonov is badly missed. There is also too much reliance on the midfield duo of Valeri Karpin and Alexander Mostovoi.

The new League season began with, at last, a real challenger for Spartak, who have won the championship four times in a row. Lokomotiv look to have turned into a real force as a result of several signings. These include Spartak's Ilya Tsymbalar, who was sold after being seen allegedly drunk in public.

Victor Gusev

HUNGARY

'New Pecs' in, Szeged out

GAZSZER FC's merger with Second Division MFC Pecs was agreed during the winter break so top-flight football has been brought back to the south-west of Hungary.

The 'new Pecs' now stand mid-table in a division that comprises just 17 clubs after Szeged went to the wall and had their results expunged.

Whether the bottom two or three clubs will be relegated at the end of the season remains to be seen, but it shows how seriously football is threatened by the financial crisis that is affecting every club except MTK.

Bob Vaughan

CZECH REP

Kadlec may come back

A 3-1 WIN away to Dukla kept Sparta's chances of success in the League alive. However, Slavia's 2-1 home victory over Chmel Blsany maintained their four-point lead at the top.

No other challengers are in sight, since Teplice have slipped right out of contention and even third-placed Petra Drnovice are 16 points off the top.

Slavia and Sparta's sustained presence in European competition has allowed national coach Jozef Chovanec to see how some of the club's lesser known players perform on an international footing.

He has also been keeping tabs on Petra's libero, Miro Kadlec, who has said he is willing to return to the squad despite his veteran status. Kadlec's experience could prove valuable, especially since there is a problem in the middle of the defence, with Jan Suchoparek playing only Second Division football in Germany and Sparta's Jiri Novotny lacking aerial presence.

Bob Vaughan

BULGARIA

Stoichkov goes Stateside

THERE is no further need, at least for the moment, to wonder how the national team's new assistant coach, Hristo Stoichkov, will relate to the boss Stoicho Mladenov. Stoichkov is now in the USA after joining MLS side Chicago Fire.

Meanwhile changes were afoot at Stoichkov's old club, CSKA. Dimitar Penev, the former national coach,

has departed and been replaced by ex-CSKA player Spas Djevizo.

Ironically, CSKA's owner is Penev's nephew, Lubo, but his uncle had to 'walk' after a series of bad results allowed Levski to go nine points clear in the League.

However, CSKA indicated that they have not given up the chase by demolishing relegation-threatened Minjor Pernik 6-1. Others fighting against the drop include Pirin, Dobrudzha and Shumen.

Bob Vaughan

ROMANIA

Steaua slide continues

DINAMO's 5-2 hammering of mid-table Universitatea Craiova kept them 13 points clear of second-placed Rapid and a mighty 29 ahead of Steaua, who went down 3-2 at home to National on the same day.

Steaua took only one point from their first two games of the spring campaign, despite new coach Victor Piturca ringing the changes during the winter break.

However, his new signings look unlikely to be able to replace Adrian Mutu and Ion Vladoiu, now at Inter and Offenbach Kickers respectively.

Steaua's point came in the 2-2 derby game away to Rapid, who are clearly missing international goalkeeper Bogdan Lobont, now in Holland with Ajax.

In the Cup semi-finals, brought forward to accommodate Euro 2000 finals preparation, both first-leg ties ended 2-0 – U Craiova defeating Rapid, Dinamo overcoming Otelul.

Bob Vaughan

SLOVAKIA

Kosice exploit Inter slip

THE SECOND half of the season is being compressed into just over two months with a brief break before the western towns host the finals of the European Under-21 Championship, from which the semi-finalists qualify for the Olympics.

There was a surprise on the first matchday back when Inter could only draw at Ruzomberok. This enabled FC Kosice to go top after they comfortably beat Zilina at home.

At the bottom, Prievidza, Banska Bystrica and Dunajska Streda are all deep in trouble, but with seven teams going down at the end of the season there is already a battle on among the mid-table clubs to avoid the drop. Watch this space!

Bob Vaughan

UKRAINE

Loba's position confirmed

VETERAN coach Valerii Lobanovskyi finally has accepted the post of head coach of the national team. He has signed a contract for two years and will share his duties between the Ukraine squad and his club, Kyiv Dynamo. Leonid Buryak and Vladimir Veremeyev will assist him.

More than two months ago the president of the Ukraine federation, Valerii Pustovoitenko, persuaded 'Loba', 61, to take the job. At first, he hesitated because of the obvious problems he will face in the process of rebuilding the national side. However, his acceptance was inevitable.

Lobanovskyi was in charge of the USSR national team for three spells – including the 1982, 1986 and 1990 World Cups – and all his previous squads were based on Kyiv Dynamo players. One problem he will

Two roles...Lobanovskyi

encounter now is that, at present, some key positions at his club side are occupied by foreigners. Ramiz Mamedov and Alexei Guerassimenko are from Russia, Kakha Kaladze and Georgi Demetradze from Georgia, Alexandre Khatskevitch and Valentin Bialkevich from Belarus, and Maxim Khatskikh from Uzbekistan.

Yet Pustovoitenko has expressed his confidence in the new appointment. "With Lobanovskyi we will definitely find our way to Korea and Japan," he said.

Oleg Zadernovsky

Pro-file Jurek Dudek

Keeper plucked from obscurity is on the way up

MODEST Feyenoord and Poland keeper Jurek Dudek may claim that he is not a star, but many would surely beg to differ, not least the fans at his club and his admirers at Real Madrid and Manchester United.

He has been in exceptional form for Feyenoord over the past three years, and now rates among the best keepers in Europe. Although his agent maintains he has had no discussions with other clubs about a transfer, it will be a major surprise if Dudek is still in Holland next season.

Dudek's big break, his move from Polish side Sokol Tychy to Feyenoord in the summer of 1996, is something of a Cinderella tale, with a football jersey playing the part of a shoe.

"In the winter of 1996, I went with Sokol to Holland for a training camp and as I was one of the youngest players, I had to take care of the team's strip. I haven't an explanation for it, but I forgot to bring the bag containing our shirts with me when we played Excelsior Rotterdam in a friendly and so we had to borrow some shirts from Feyenoord.

"I asked a team-mate to take a few photos of me wearing Feyenoord's kit. But I could not have dreamt that I would be signing for them six months later."

At the time, many observers were surprised that Feyenoord should want to take on Dudek, a little-known player who had signed for Sokol from Third Division Concordia Knurow only a few months earlier and had appeared in just 15 Polish top-flight games. But Feyenoord had liked what they had seen of Dudek and were convinced they had unearthed the long-term successor to Ed De Goey.

Dudek had to be patient, spending all the 1996-97 season on the bench, but his chance finally came when De Goey moved to Chelsea in the 1997 close season. The young keeper quickly showed himself to be made of the right stuff, with his bravery, reflexes and unwavering concentration, and he did even better last season, when he was rightly voted the best keeper in Holland.

It is strange that Dudek's talent has not always been recognised in his homeland. Ex-Poland coach Janusz Wojcik only grudgingly capped him, twice. But the new man, Jerzy Engel, holds Dudek in much higher regard and picked him for the recent 1-0 friendly defeat against France, when only his brilliance prevented a thrashing.

Jurek Dudek is a keeper on the up.

Dariusz Kurowski

Fact file

Club Feyenoord (Hol)
Country Poland
Born March 23, 1973, in Rybnik
Previous clubs Concordia Knurow, Sokol Tychy
International debut February 1998, v Israel
International caps 3
Honours Dutch League 1999

Egomania!

BRAZIL

Vasco's Romario and Edmundo just can't get along, says Brian Homewood

Bitter rivals...Edmundo (left) and Romario cannot even bear to look at each other

THREE MONTHS have passed since Vasco da Gama signed Romario to play alongside Edmundo in attack and it is now patently obvious that the pair cannot co-exist.

Each has been superb when the other has been missing from the team, but they have been a disaster when playing together.

While Romario was scoring 12 goals in seven games in the Rio-Sao Paulo Cup which opens the Brazilian season, Edmundo was at home in a huff, having stormed out after being stripped of the captaincy. When Edmundo opened Vasco's Carioca Championship campaign against Madureira by scoring both goals in a 2-0 win, Romario was standing under an umbrella, nursing an injury.

When the two played together in the Rio-Sao Paulo Final against Palmeiras, Vasco suffered a 4-0 mauling and the pair refused to exchange a glance, never mind a pass.

The partnership has worked only once – when Manchester United's Gary Neville generously handed them two goals in the World Club Championship. Otherwise, it has always seemed that no penalty area is big enough for both of them and their massive egos.

Romario arrived at Vasco in December, having been kicked out of arch-rivals Flamengo for sampling the nightlife in Caxias do Sul and posing for photos with the Queen of the Grape Festival. On rejoining the club where he began his career, he promised: "I haven't come here to steal anyone's space, in particular Edmundo's." But, even if unintentionally, he has done exactly that.

Vasco managed to keep the differences under the surface during the World Club Championship, but once the routine of the new Brazilian season set in, the bad feeling quickly bubbled over.

Five minutes before Vasco's opening group match in the Rio-Sao Paulo Cup, manager Antonio Lopes crassly announced that he was taking the captaincy from Edmundo and giving it to Romario.

A livid Edmundo refused to play and was promptly suspended. Romario, revelling in his new-found solitude, led Vasco almost single-handedly to the Final, averaging nearly two goals a game against some of Brazil's toughest defences.

Edmundo, on being told his ban was over, refused to play until he had been paid for the games he had missed. That brought yet another ban, until he finally apologised the day before the second leg of the Final with Palmeiras.

In this, an apathetic, outclassed Vasco were three down by half-time and early in the second half Romario limped off with a pulled muscle. The injury kept him out of the Madureira game and gave Edmundo the freedom he had cherished before Romario's arrival.

Even when the two were chums, they failed to combine on the pitch. They played briefly together at Flamengo in 1995 without ever hitting it off. Now, however, they are bitter enemies, having fallen out over one of the infamous toilet doors in Romario's theme bar, where caricatures of Brazilian footballing personalities are a feature. One showed Edmundo sitting on a deflated ball alongside a Brazilian model with whom he had a child before separating in acrimonious circumstances.

Edmundo, stung by massive maintenance costs from the woman, was not amused but his request to have the painting removed was ignored.

Failure to convince the two players to live in harmony cost Lopes his job after three-and-a-half years in charge. He was sacked after the Palmeiras defeat, a shabby reward for the man who, by winning the Libertadores Cup in 1998, provided the 'Dried Cod' with the greatest moment in their history.

Abel Braga was brought in as a replacement but given only a three-month contract. The man Vasco really want is Luiz Felipe Scolari, who has supervised a major clearout at Palmeiras, feeling that the team who won the Libertadores last year had passed its peak.

Captain Zinho and striker Paulo Nunes were shipped off to Gremio, while central defender Cleber and striker Oseas went to Cruzeiro.

New-look Palmeiras responded by winning the Rio-Sao Paulo Cup, adding to Scolari's already growing prestige. Midfielder Alex, the player of the moment in Brazil, was the team's inspiration, scoring some stunning goals.

Freddy Rincon's protracted move to Santos from Corinthians – where the veteran Colombian had become increasingly dissatisfied with his salary – topped the transfers in the close season.

Dejan Petkovic, a Yugoslav who made a huge impact during two years with Vitoria, joined Flamengo, who also poached coach Rene Simoes from the Jamaican national team and gave him the job of general manager.

Lopes apart, Carlos Alberto Parreira and former Brazil captain Ricardo Gomes were the major coaching victims. Parreira was sacked by Fluminense despite leading the club out of the Third Division of the national championship. Gomes, kicked out of Sport Recife last year, was dismissed by Guarani.

Lopes found a new job at Gremio – who sacked Emerson Leao after only 10 games in charge – and his first condition on signing was that he continue to be allowed to wear his so-called 'lucky' green shirt. Leao, meanwhile, stepped into the newly-vacant Guarani job.

Making an impact...Bella Vista have topped the table in Uruguay

URUGUAY

Good outlook for Bella Vista

BELLA VISTA are the revelations of Uruguay's opening championship, which has been enlarged to 18 clubs, with two provincial teams brought in to widen interest.

The Montevideo club's rise to the top of the table is particularly surprising because they recently sold three leading players, Diego Alonso, Facundo Careca and Martin Garcia.

Penarol began the season with a record 17 players suspended, though mostly for international games, following last year's free-for-all after their Mercosur Cup semi-final with Flamengo. One of them, Walter Pandiani (banned for 10 games) was sold to Spain's La Coruna.

Juan Ramon Carrasco is back in action at 43, as player-coach and captain of Rocha, a former amateur team who won a play-off to enter the First Division this season.

Carrasco, who has also played in Argentina and Brazil and has a seven-year-old grandson, last year formed a team of professionals without clubs in Uruguay. The so-called Dream Team played 112 games, and Carrasco scored 49 goals – as well as coaching!

Eric Weil

ARGENTINA

Top two face fixture crisis

RIVER PLATE and Boca Juniors have won six out of the last seven tournaments in Argentina and still have the strongest squads, but severe fixture congestion has raised doubts about whether they can retain their supremacy. They both face 40-game programmes during the first half of the year, and River Plate, for example, logged more than 26,000 miles in their first five away trips.

Curiously, River and Boca, plus San Lorenzo, another of Argentina's Libertadores Cup representatives, were the only unbeaten teams after six games in the closing championship. All had 14 points, with Boca top on goal difference.

Pre-season transfers were at a premium due to lack of cash, and the only important moves were those of striker Marcelo Delgado from Racing to Boca; utility player Diego Latorre, who returned from Cruz Azul (Mexico) to Rosario Central, and goalkeeper Claudio Flores, from Penarol (Uruguay) to Lanus.

The accent is on youth – the average age of Ferro Carril Oeste's team is less than 22 – and the standard is poor.

Boca, still with a long injury list, are lucky to have many promising youngsters and one, 20-year-old Alfredo Moreno, had scored six goals in the first six games.

There has been trouble on and off the field. The Velez Sarsfield-Lanus match was suspended after 15 seconds when a smoke bomb exploded close to Velez goalkeeper Jose Luis Chilavert, who was carried off almost unconscious.

On the same day, a Colon fan was badly beaten up by Union fans before the Santa Fe derby and was in a coma in hospital.

In La Plata a youth was shot in a leg from a bus taking Newell's Old Boys fans away from the game against Estudiantes.

Eric Weil

On the move...Claudio Flores

WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

PROBLEMS loomed ahead of the opening World Cup qualifiers at the end of March with UEFA trying to persuade FIFA to reduce the requirement for clubs to release players for international duty from five days to two.

Some big clubs do not want to release them at all. Lazio, for example, who have four Argentinian internationals, wanted to reach an agreement whereby they would release only two at a time, an idea flatly rejected by the Argentinian FA. Their national side, plus those of Brazil and Uruguay, are worst affected by the situation because many of their top players are based in Europe.

FIFA has to take part of the blame. World Cup qualifiers in the various confederations should have been coincided as much as possible to minimise the disruption to clubs. However, this has not happened.

Another problem is that FIFA recently authorised clubs to ask for financial compensation from countries when releasing players. This could work out very expensive for some FAs and could even result in fewer players based abroad being selected.

● CONMEBOL's general secretary, Eduardo De Luca, warned that South American teams may participate in the Olympic Games for the last time in Athens in 2004 unless professional players are paid to play.

He said that some of the other confederations had raised the same concerns with FIFA, and the solution would be either for the Olympics to become amateur again (which would be difficult) or for a share of the profits to be divided among participating players.

South American countries did not take part in last year's Pan American Games for the same reason.

Eric Weil

ROUND-UP

ARTURO BUSTAMANTE, a member of the COLOMBIAN FA's executive committee, was shot dead in a restaurant in Caldas, near Medellin – yet another soccer-related death.

Meanwhile, a former president of the America club, **PEDRO CHANG**, was arrested on suspicion of taking money from drug cartels for the team.

BOLIVIA: Blooming, resting players while engaged in the Libertadores Cup, crashed 5-0 to Real Potosi to lose their 100 per cent record in the sixth round of the opening championship, but still topped the table.

CHILE: Last year's top two, Universidad de Chile and Universidad Catolica, led two of the four groups in the pre-season cup tournament. But both squads are diminished. U Catolica sold international Jorge Vargas to Italy's Reggina, while U de Chile, deep in debt, sold Esteban Valencia to Argentina's Colon.

PARAGUAY: A newspaper has accused the FA of fraud for advertising that Paraguay were to meet Hungary in an international in February when, in fact, their opponents were Hungarian club side Tatabanya. 'Hungary' went on to play Uruguay, and a Uruguayan FA official declared that the 'tour' was arranged by Argentinian agents who were paid £53,000.

PERU: Champions Universitario led the opening championship after six games.

Eric Weil

United in victory...Canada gather round the trophy

Canada beat the odds

Paul Gardner reports on a Gold Cup surprise

ORGANISERS of the Gold Cup could take out the standard insurance against earthquakes and other natural disasters that might happen in California. They could NOT insure against the remote possibility of the least attractive team in the tournament actually winning it. But it happened.

Who would have thought of Canada as Gold Cup champions? Since their far from triumphal appearance at the 1986 World Cup (played three, lost three, no goals scored), the Canadians have been a virtual hole in the air in the region. Suddenly they are back, boring as ever, but with an undisputed right to the Gold Cup title and the £200,000 that went with it.

Sure, they had been almost laughably lucky to get out of the first round with a coin-toss 'victory' over South Korea after the two countries finished level on points, goal difference and goals scored. But after that, they disposed of favourites Mexico before deservedly beating Colombia in the Final.

Their star, the man voted most valuable player of the tournament, was goalkeeper Craig Forrest – which says everything about the defensive nature of Canada's game.

"In our wildest dreams," said midfielder Paul Peschisolido, "we couldn't have imagined this." Clearly the organisers did not imagine it either. Assessing the Canadians, the official programme said there were not "too many remarkable aspects to their game" and predicted that they would be going home after the first round.

Holger Osieck, Canada's German coach, brushed aside talk of his team's lack of style, and said they had played some "quality football" – an opinion that was not widely shared.

Colombia coach Luis Augusto Garcia was closer to the mark: "They don't play good football, they don't put on a show. But they fight for 90 minutes and they defend in numbers, which makes it very difficult to get into their penalty area with the ball under control."

FIFA president Sepp Blatter, presenting the trophy, was tact itself: "I was very surprised to see the good tactical play of the Canadian team."

For the beleaguered Gold Cup organisers, the headache was not Canada's style of play as much as the fact that nobody wanted to attend their games. With the USA, Mexico, Honduras and Guatemala all knocked out before the semis, attendances dropped through the floor.

This was a disaster. The average attendance for the 12 first-round dates was a healthy 32,553. But the two semi-finals drew a total of only 6,250, while there was an announced (but suspiciously received) attendance at the Final of only 6,200 in the huge Los Angeles Coliseum. Attendances at the previous four Gold Cup deciders, three of which featured Mexico, had averaged 87,282.

The missing fans meant a financial loss of around £2million.

There were several other unwelcome consequences of the tournament. Trinidad & Tobago coach Bertille St Clair was fired as soon as it was over – despite his team having reached the semi-finals. Guatemala's Carlos Miloc resigned then returned when he was promised better support from clubs in future. And Rene Simoes, who had taken Jamaica to France 98, quit to take up a job with Flamengo in his native Brazil.

Costa Rica also ditched their coach, Marvin Rodriguez, but that was good news for the Spanish-speaking former USA coach Steve Sampson, who was offered the job.

For the current US coach, Bruce Arena, the Gold Cup was a chastening experience. His team did not play well and were eliminated in the quarter-finals by Colombia. And while Craig Forrest's claim that "this victory puts Canada on the soccer map and will make everyone sit up and take notice" was greatly exaggerated, Arena certainly will be aware that it makes the USA's chances of qualifying for World Cup 2002 more difficult.

To Canada's renewed confidence can be added the growing strength of Honduras, Trinidad & Tobago and Costa Rica, who all did at least as well as the USA. If one assumes that one of the three World Cup places will go to Mexico, then it's going to be quite a fight for the other two.

Gold rush...Jason De Vos (left) and Craig Forrest celebrate their win

More like the real thing

Developments on and off the field look promising, writes Paul Gardner

Soccer-specific...Columbus Crew's new arena attracted the League's highest average attendance

USA

MAJOR League Soccer's new promotional slogan – it would be unkind to call it a gimmick, I suppose – is "It's Your Game!"

That's the phrase that will be featured in television ads throughout the season, and Commissioner Don Garber explained the thinking behind it. "We're bringing the game back to the fans," he said. "We spoke to them, we listened when they told us they wanted to play the same game as the rest of the world, and now we've acted."

So the infamous shoot-out tie-breaker has been banished, draws will be allowed after a 10-minute overtime period, the referee (instead of a timekeeper) will keep the time on the field. FIFA rules at last!

The 12 MLS clubs also have been re-aligned into three four-team divisions (rather than last season's two of six teams): WESTERN – Colorado Rapids, Kansas City Wizards, Los Angeles Galaxy, San Jose Earthquakes; CENTRAL – Chicago Fire, Columbus Crew, Dallas Burn, Tampa Bay Mutiny; EASTERN – DC United, Miami Fusion, New England Revolution, MetroStars.

Garber, warming to his theme, told a pre-season gathering in Manhattan: "We have $135million in secured corporate sponsorship over the next five years. We have the most diverse ethnic audience of any sport in the USA. This season we have the best mix of young American and international signings in our history. And we expect to expand by two teams no later than the 2002 season."

The biggest challenge, he said, is the grounds. The search for pro-quality stadiums suitable for soccer has been going on here for over 40 years. Borrowed baseball or gridiron stadiums have had to serve, but the expedient has never been satisfactory.

Now reality finally seems to be being recognised. If MLS clubs want soccer-specific stadiums, they're going to have to build them themselves. Columbus Crew owner Lamar Hunt made the leap last year, spending £18million to build the USA's first pro soccer stadium. It was a high-risk experiment that was closely monitored by other MLS owners. So far, they like what they've seen. Because Columbus, with only an average team, topped the attendance league with 17,696 per game.

A spanking new venue evidently lures fans. The opportunity to make money on parking and food and drink sales at the stadium also is important. "We aim to continue building such stadiums," says Garber. Right on cue, Los Angeles Galaxy announced plans to build both an academy and a 25,000-seat stadium that will make southern California "the heart and soul of soccer" in the USA.

Part of the plan is to have the new complex serve as the national training centre – a project for which the United States Soccer Federation already has invited bids.

Emphasising the trend, here come MetroStars, apparently considering the construction of not one stadium but two. The club, who now play in the 77,000-capacity Giants stadium, are looking at a site in Newark, a city keen to attract sports franchises. The choice is debatable: a downtown site with limited parking runs against the trend, which is for suburban stadiums surrounded by parking lots.

As for the second stadium, that would be for a team not yet in existence. MetroStars have the right to enter another side in the League and their chief investor-operator, Stuart Subotnick, says they will exercise that right in September.

When asked whether it was healthy for one owner to manage more than one team in the League, Subotnick replied: "Oh, it's healthy – anything that promotes soccer is healthy. And we're finally getting some recognition. Our US players are reaching international level. They're improving daily."

Good news that is a double-edged sword for MLS. A day before Subotnick spoke, MLS had lost one of its more promising youngsters, San Jose's Eddie Lewis, to Fulham in England. Joe-Max Moore, formerly of New England Revolution, is also now in England, with Everton. Jamaica-born Stern John, top scorer in MLS last year with Columbus Crew, is now with Nottingham Forest. Teenager Landon Donovan bypassed MLS altogether and signed with German club Bayer Leverkusen.

Which puts MLS in the same boat as, say, Argentina and Brazil: constantly losing its better young players to European clubs. To some extent this is offset by major international signings such as Lothar Matthaus and Hristo Stoichkov. But the fundamental problem of constant changes in playing personnel is worrying because it detracts from the sense of stability and permanence that the League needs to create.

MEXICO

Borja caught in comedy of errors

SOME excellent performances so far in the Summer League have been overshadowed by a comedy of errors acted out by federation officials.

For the past 30 years, the president has been allowed to hold positions other than his main job, such as Premier League president, head of the committee organising FIFA events, even TV executive.

The current incumbent, Enrique Borja, announced in December that he was retiring as president of Necaxa to become president of Tigres UNL. Borja then went to the World Club Championship in Brazil, where he met Osmar Donizete, a Brazilian player who had just signed for Mexico's Atletico Celaya.

Borja suggested that Donizete should, instead, play for Tigres – and offered him more money than Celaya had done.

Donizete promptly signed a contract with the Monterrey club, which was registered with the federation. Celaya protested, but the claim was over-ruled because they did not have a contract, merely a letter apparently signed by Donizete, in which he agreed to join them.

The Brazilian duly arrived in Mexico in time to play for Tigres in their fifth match of the Summer League, against Atlante. He helped them win this and the next two matches, but then the federation ruled that Donizete's signature on the Tigres documentation was a forgery.

Borja claimed that this was "an administrative error" but later resigned as head of the federation. Then, in an emergency meeting of the Consejo Nacional – virtually the same people who run the federation – Borja's resignation was not accepted. And, in violation of regulations, Tigres were ordered to replay the three matches they had won with Donizete, though they were allowed to carry on using him.

At first Toluca refused to replay their game with Tigres, but reversed the decision after protests from other clubs. The case continues...

Toluca, Morelia, Santos Laguna and Guadalajara topped the four groups after nine rounds.

Carlos Ramirez

Hossam quits Egypt - for now

Mark Gleeson on the departure of a legend

Out of sight...Hossam Hassan has taken his goalscoring prowess from Egypt to the Emirates

HOSSAM HASSAN'S long and sometimes troublesome career in Egypt has come to an end – for the moment. A three-month loan spell with Al Ain of the United Arab Emirates has brought to an end his 'strike' at Egypt's Al Ahly and given both him, and his previous employers, the opportunity of a fresh start.

Hassan, 33, was Egypt's captain at February's Nations Cup finals and is Africa's most capped international. He has been a fixture for almost two decades at the Cairo club and a powerful influence both on and off the field.

However, a public spat between Hassan and Ahly's coach, Rainer Zobel, led to the player and his twin, Ibrahim, being kicked off the team and forced to train on their own since November.

The move to the Gulf came as a relief to Ahly officials, scared at the prospect that Hassan and his brother might do the unthinkable and defect to neighbours Zamalek.

Instead, Hossam has gone to Abu Dhabi for a fee of £71,000 a month. But there is still every chance he will return for a swansong with Ahly. "I don't think the top scorer in 1998 and 1999 should be concerned about the renewal of contracts," he said on leaving. "On the contrary, Ahly should be concerned that I might not return."

AFRICAN SUPER CUP

Raja complete a double

MOROCCO's Raja Casablanca added the African Super Cup to last December's triumph in the African Champions League by beating Africa Sports of the Ivory Coast 2-0.

The annual game between the Champions League winners and the holders of the African Cup-Winners Cup, held as normal in Raja's home city, provided few sparks.

The visitors offered little innovation, though Raja had to wait until the second half before getting on top. Bouchaib Moubarki scored the opener seven minutes into the second half, and substitute Mohamed Armounen made the result safe four minutes from time.

Raja's victory was watched by CAF president Issa Hayatou, shortly after the FIFA inspection tour of the country, which gave their bid for the 2006 finals a positive report.

Mark Gleeson

Bailiffs move in on Zambian FA

BAILIFFS took away a rickety bus, furniture, computers, a fax machine and printers from the **ZAMBIAN** FA offices after a court ruled that they still owe a travel agency £5,200. The case dates back to the country's World Cup qualifying trip to Morocco in 1993.

Jones Nkhwazi scored a last-minute winner as **MALAWI** beat Zambia 1-0 in Lusaka. It was only the second time in 15 years that the Zambians have lost at the Independence stadium. The match was the second of two friendlies; the first ended 1-1 in Kitwe.

Both sides have new coaches, with George Mungwa trying to rebuild the Zambian team after their early exit from the Nations Cup, and Young Chimodzi replacing Jack Chamangwana (ex-Kaizer Chiefs) as coach of the Flames.

In the Zambian League, Danny Kabwe has taken charge of Power Dynamos.

Elsewhere in **SOUTHERN AFRICA**, Romania-born Ted Dumitru has quit as coach of second-placed Orlando Pirates in **SOUTH AFRICA** because he says he was not being paid enough.

Pirates, who have sold South African international Sibusiso Zuma to FC Copenhagen, are seven points behind Mamelodi Sundowns, who seem set for a third successive title.

Champions Primeiro Agosto took the **ANGOLAN** Super Cup with a 3-0 second leg victory over Cup winners Sagrada Esperanca. The first leg ended goalless.

AS Aviacao warmed up for the new season with a trip to Portugal under coach Carlos Alhinho, who is also taking on the Angolan national team this year.

MDC United are the leaders in **MALAWI's** Super League, two points ahead of Super Escom with one game to go.

ZIMBABWE's leading club, Dynamos, have appointed Yugoslav Zoran Pesic as coach.

CENTRAL AFRICA

THE COACHES of **CONGO** and the **DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO** both quit after the Nations Cup finals. Medard Lusadisu left DRC and accused several of his players of "attempting to sabotage the team with ill-discipline" at the tournament; David Memy quit Congo after signing a two-year contract with Mangapsort in Gabon.

CAMEROON's victorious team shared in a £700,000 payout from government and businesses.

EAST AFRICA

THE ANNUAL East and Central African Club Championship has been postponed again after **ZANZIBAR** withdrew as hosts. There are plans to hold it in Uganda from May 27 to June 10, but only if the Ugandan FA agrees sponsorship with tournament organisers.

A FIFA-CAF delegation visited **KENYA** to try to resolve an impasse between the government and the Kenyan FA. Six of the federation's eight committee members have resigned.

Former Tanzania national coach Sunday Kayuni has taken over at Kenyan club Coast Stars, who are in this year's African Cup-winners Cup.

St George have a seven-point lead in **ETHIOPIA**, followed by Bank and Coffee FC.

MAURITIUS champions Vascoas Phoenix FC have been kicked out of the Champions League after being found guilty of playing a suspended player in January's preliminary round against St Michel United of Seychelles. St Michel took Vascoas' place for the first-round meeting with Highlanders of Zimbabwe.

Red Star won the President's Cup in **SEYCHELLES**, beating St Michel United 3-2 in a shoot-out after a 0-0 draw.

NORTH AFRICA

HENRI KASPERCZAK is the new national team coach of **MOROCCO**. He takes over from Henri Michel, fired after the team's early elimination from the Nations Cup.

This is the third national team job in Africa for Kasperczak, who took Ivory Coast to third place at the 1994 Nations Cup finals and Tunisia to the 1996 finals, as well as France 98.

Raja Casablanca's attempt to retain the League title is under threat from FUS Rabat, who have a one-point lead at the top.

Veteran coach Mahmoud Al-Gohari, who took **EGYPT** to their 1998 Nations Cup triumph and qualified the country for Italia 90, is back for his fourth spell in charge of the national team, replacing Gerard Gili. Frenchman Gili was dismissed in March after Egypt were eliminated in the quarter-finals of the Nations Cup.

Zamalek, who are 10 points behind Al Ahly at the halfway stage of the League, became the first Egyptian team to play in Palestinian-ruled areas for 34 years when they beat Palestine's national team 2-1 in a match to inaugurate a new stadium in Gaza.

Meanwhile, Zamalek's 17-year-old Ahmed Hossan has left to join Bastia in France.

Esperance are four points clear in **TUNISIA**, from Etoile Sahel and Club Africain.

WEST AFRICA

THE LATE return of **NIGERIAN** stars Nwankwo Kanu and Celestine Babayaro to their clubs in England after the Nations Cup took all the headlines, but Luton Town also fined defender Efe Sodje, who stayed behind for a holiday in Nigeria after the Final. Manager Lennie Lawrence says Sodje's chances of a new contract are now under threat.

Former Nigerian international striker Rachidi Yekini, now 36, has joined Africa Sports of Ivory Coast after a brief spell with Al Shabab in Saudi Arabia.

Emmanuel Nwakire has been given a three-month contract by Dutch club RKC Waalwijk – shortly after being sacked by FC Utrecht when he returned late from a visit home.

Nigerian club Jasper United have fired coach Alfred Ekundina after three months. Tony Ukaechu takes his place.

GHANAIAN international Godwin Attram has been loaned out by PSV Eindhoven to Silkeborg in Denmark because the Dutch embassy in Accra refuses to issue him with a work permit. It says it is "unsure" of his identity. Another Ghanaian in Holland, Feyenoord defender Christian Gyan, is talking about "retiring" from the international team because his involvement is retarding his club career.

Frenchman Philippe Redon, coach of Cameroon when they finished fourth at the 1992 Nations Cup finals in Senegal, is the new national coach of **LIBERIA**.

Liberian international Mass Sarr is to move from Reading in the English Second Division to join MLS.

Stay-away...Efe Sodje

The **IVORIAN** championship again has been divided into two sections, with Satellite FC leading champions Africa Sports by one point in Pool A and ASEC Abidjan sharing the lead in Pool B with Daoukro, AS Bassam and Sabe. Meanwhile, ASEC have named Michel Descastel from Switzerland as their new coach.

SIERRA LEONE have appointed Abdulai Sesay to take charge of their national team after dismissing Ishmael Dyfan, who held the post for less than six months and was never in charge of a match.

FC Santos are the early leaders in **BURKINA FASO's** championship, ahead of Racing Club Bobo Dioulasso.

Mark Gleeson

Pro-file Marc-Vivien Foe

Cameroon key man eying World Cup success

DURING Italia 90, Cameroon served notice that Africa would be the next footballing power. They beat Argentina in the group stage, and became the first African country to reach the quarter-finals.

Since then, they have qualified for all the major tournaments, but failed to reproduce the magic that transfixed the world 10 years ago.

The recent African Nations Cup ended Cameroon's decade in the wilderness, their victory over Nigeria in the Final earning them the trophy for the third time.

In Marc-Vivien Foe they had one of the outstanding players of the tournament. "I don't want to get too excited because we have more to do," he said after the win, "but it is a great thing for our people and every Cameroon player."

The Nations Cup is held at a time of year when European clubs are involved in domestic League run-ins. So it was no surprise that the tournament was preceded by squabbling between national federations and clubs over the issue of player release.

"For many players it is very important to play internationals," says 24-year-old Foe, who plays in England with West Ham. "But it is very difficult to organise fixtures to please everybody, and difficult for players to make a choice. It is up to FIFA to do something about it."

There has also been controversy over the import of African players to Europe in their mid-teens, when many, including Foe, believe they are too young. "Some African players have a lot of problems in Europe when they have nobody to guide them. Realistically, only two in 10 will make it. That is too low a percentage and too big a risk for the players."

But the international future looks bright for Cameroon, who are well placed to follow in the footsteps of the side who won the 1988 Nations Cup.

"What really pleased me about this year's tournament was that the players performed to a very high level," says Foe. "It should not be too long until an African country wins the World Cup. It could even be us, because we are a young side. But we have a lot to do before we can achieve that."

Syerramia Willoughby

Fact file

Club West Ham (Eng)
Country Cameroon
Born May 1, 1975, in Nkololl
Previous clubs Canon Yaounde, Lens (Fra)
International debut October 1994, v Zaire
International caps 24 (3 goals)
Honours African Nations Cup 2000; French League 1998

AFC stands by Asian Cup hosts

The confederation has backed Lebanon's staging of the continental championship despite military action by Israel, writes Michael Church

Firm assurances...Velappan

ANY LINGERING doubts that the finals of the Asian Cup will be held in Lebanon in October were dispelled by the Asian Football Confederation, which ruled out moving the championship away from the troubled country.

Speculation that the finals would be staged elsewhere came after Lebanon suffered several air raids by Israeli forces which cut the power supply in the capital, Beirut.

"The AFC executive committee... have categorically declared that the Asian Cup will be hosted by Lebanon in October 2000," said AFC general secretary Peter Velappan. "There is already an agenda for the liberation of Lebanon in June, and everybody thinks that peace will return soon and that the Asian Cup will be played in a complete atmosphere of peace."

Lebanon was awarded the right to host the competition just over three years ago, a decision that split Asian football, and the 12th Asian Cup has been dogged with controversy ever since. In giving the competition to the Lebanese, the AFC broke with the tradition of alternating the finals between east and west Asia. The decision was particularly unpopular with China, who were favourites to win the rights.

"We don't feel that there is any risk regarding the organisation of the Asian Cup," said Velappan. "We are satisfied completely that the Asian Cup will be in Lebanon with the help of all the Asian family."

Immediately after the executive committee meeting, Asad Taqi, the chairman of the AFC's organising committee for Asian Cup 2000, made his second site visit of the year, accompanied by fellow executive committee member Mohammed Bin Hammam of Qatar.

April will see the final line-up for the Asian Cup completed, with Iran and South Korea expected to join the other qualifiers with ease from their respective groups. Qatar and Kazakhstan are expected to battle it out in Group 4, while Thailand should overcome Malaysia in Group 8 to qualify for their second successive finals. The draw will be held in Beirut on April 27.

Champions through to last four

Defending champions Jubilo Iwata qualified for the semi-finals of the Asian Club Championship with the competition's only 100 per cent record in the round-robin quarter-finals.

The Japanese champions clocked up wins against Kashima Antlers, Suwon Bluewings and Thai side Sinthana to cruise into the last four, where they will meet Pirouzi of Iran.

Korea's Suwon took the other spot in the semi-finals by virtue of a single goal, the K-League champions finishing ahead of Kashima in the group thanks to a 4-0 win over the Thais. Kashima could only manage a 3-0 win and failed to progress to the last four for the second time in three years.

Suwon will face Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal, who will host the semi-finals and Final in Riyadh at the end of April.

However, Al Hilal will be missing key striker Jassem Al-Houwaidi as they aim to lift the title for the first time since 1991. The Kuwaiti international tore a cruciate knee ligament and is due to be out for between six and eight months. That could also keep the 29-year-old former physical education teacher out of his country's attempt to win the Asian Cup.

Meanwhile, Japan's Shimizu S-Pulse joined Al Ahli of Saudi Arabia, Iraq's Al Zawra and Bangkok Bank from Thailand in the semi-finals of the Asian Cup-winners Cup with a 5-2 aggregate win over South Korean side Anyang Cheetahs.

Michael Church

Long-term injury...Al Hilal's Kuwaiti striker Jassem Al-Houwaidi

JAPAN

Jubilo start well but Reysol look dangerous

NEW Jubilo Iwata manager Djoko Hadzievski has had a dream start in Japan, qualifying for the semi-finals of the Asian Club Championship and winning the Xerox Super Cup in his first four games in charge. But Jubilo, the defending J.League champions, lost at home on the opening day of the new League season.

Jubilo met Emperor's Cup winners Nagoya Grampus Eight in the Xerox Super Cup, the curtain-raiser to the Japanese season, and won 3-2 on penalties after a 1-1 draw. However, Kashiwa Reysol's Hideaki Kitajima netted an extra-time winner to dampen the champions' spirits as the League got underway.

Reysol are among the favourites this season and their win was all the more impressive for being achieved without any of their foreign players: Hong Myung-bo, Drakulic Sasa and Park Kun-ha.

Kashima Antlers also were a focus of attention as the opening day approached because Bebeto was expected to make his debut. But coach Toninho Cerezo did not even include him among the substitutes, clearly deciding that the Brazilian, who had been in Japan for only five days, still needed time to adjust.

Cerezo had reason to be relaxed as Antlers gave Grampus their first League defeat in 11 games, and his side looked much sharper and more organised than in February's Asian Club Championship games.

"The question," said Toninho "is whether Bebeto can even get into this team if we keep on playing like this. He's the star but it's up to him. He's got to make the effort."

Shimizu S-Pulse, unlucky not to take last year's title, have kept exactly the same first-choice team, and made a strong start. They made it into the semi-finals of the Asian Cup-winners Cup and came through a difficult first League game, at home to Cerezo Osaka, with a 3-2 win.

Promoted FC Tokyo had a dream start with a 1-0 win away to Yokohama F Marinos. "The players did their job," said manager Kiyoshi Okuma, "as individuals and as a team, all the way to the end."

Marinos' new coach, Ossie Ardiles, was less content, saying: "We were tactically all over the place at times. I want to play modern football but today we were slow and uninteresting."

Mike Plastow & Michi Ishijima

Al Nijmeh end 25-year wait

AL NIJMEH have clinched the **LEBANESE** title, breaking the 11-year dominance of Al Ansar. The club won the championship for the first time in quarter of a century by defeating Al Akhae 1-0 in the penultimate round of matches.

English coach Mark Harrison has been appointed national coach of **BANGLADESH** on a three-year contract. Meanwhile, after the preliminary round of Bangladesh's first ever National League, Chittagong Abahani, Dhaka Mohammedan SC, Abahani KC and Muktijoddah KC were promoted to the second stage.

Calcutta giants Mohun Bagan lead the way in the race for the **INDIAN** National League, taking 28 points from 13 matches. Churchill Brothers are one point behind.

Cong An Hanoi and Song Lam Nghe An share the lead in **VIETNAM** after 13 games.

Jalal Talebi, the man who guided **IRAN** to their historic win over the USA at France 98, is back at the helm of the national team. He was appointed following the sacking of Mansour Pourhedari for taking the position of head coach at club side Esteghlal without the permission of the FA.

Iran striker Khodadad Azizi has joined MLS club San Jose Earthquakes after a transfer merry-go-round. Azizi and German club Koln agreed to terminate the 28-year-old's contract, with the Iranian announcing that he was set to join Turkish side Trabzonspor. Two weeks later, however, Azizi cancelled that agreement and has now gone to the States.

UZBEKISTAN have appointed former Russian national coach Pavel Sadyrin as head coach following the death of Mahmood Rakhimov. Rakhimov was killed in a car crash in December after leading the Uzbeks to the finals of the Asian Cup in Lebanon later this year.

Police Club are three points clear of Air Force after 32 rounds in the **IRAQI** League. Al Talaba are third.

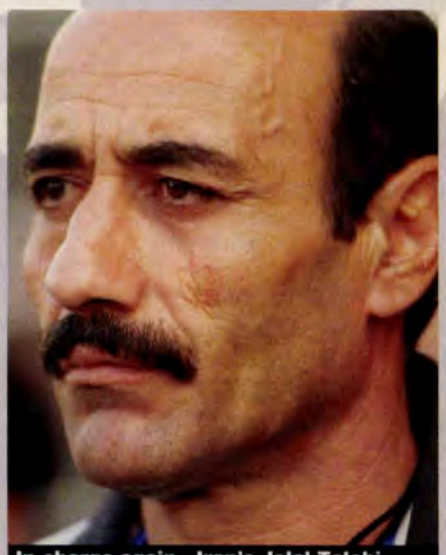
Al Arabi came from behind against Kazma to clinch **KUWAIT's** Crown Prince Cup for a record fourth time. Midfielder Faysal Bourqaba won the tie with a 93rd-minute golden goal.

Al Sadd landed the **QATAR** title for the eighth time with a 4-0 win over Qatar Sports Club.

Al Jabala were crowned champions of **SYRIA** for the fourth time, finishing ahead of Hottine thanks to a 1-0 win over Al Jihad.

OMAN have named 1970 Brazilian World Cup winner Carlos Alberto Torres as the new national team coach. The 56-year-old has been given a two-year contract, to begin in April. Torres's first test will be the upcoming World Cup qualifying Group 2 fixtures, against Syria, Laos and the Philippines.

Michael Church, Azam Mahmood & Mohamed Chbaro



In charge again...Iran's Jalal Talebi

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ACROSS

1 Sporting Lisbon's hot property, once with Newell's Old Boys (7)
7 Japan's most-capped player, now at Jubilo Iwata (5)
8 Cagliari striker who helped Cameroon win the African Nations Cup (5)
9 Teenage forward with Dinamo Bucharest and now Romania (7)
10 Helsingborgs midfielder recently recruited from Orebro (9)
15 Bosnian attacker bought by Slovenia's Maribor from Olimpija (7)
18 Sampson's immediate successor as USA team boss (5)
19 Midfielder of Roma and Italy (5)
20 Dane currently in charge of the Israeli national side (7)

DOWN

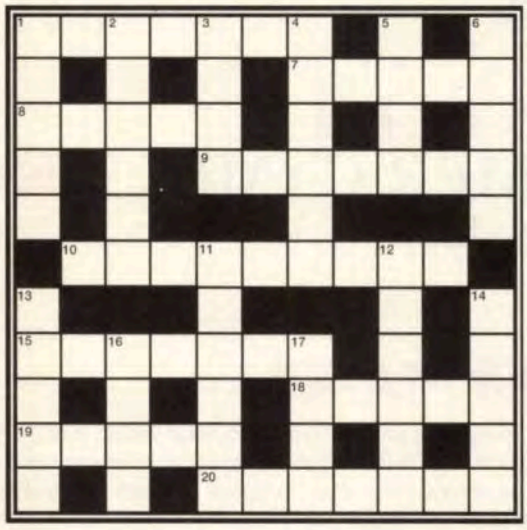
1 Ex-Monaco defender who left Newcastle for Marseille (5)
2 Romanian midfield man in Belgium with Anderlecht (6)
3 Coach dismissed by Anderlecht during the 1998-99 season (4)
4 Colombian veteran in Corinthians' World Club Championship side (6)
5 Real striker – four times a scorer for Spain v Austria last year (4)
6 First name of Czech international midfielder Bejbl (5)
11 Former Cannes, Bordeaux and France Under-21 midfielder at Marseille (6)
12 German coach who led the ill-fated Flugels to the 1999 Emperor's Cup (6)
13 Ivory Coast forward in Spain with Real Oviedo (5)
14 Euro 2000 Group C contenders with Norway, Slovenia and Yugoslavia (5)
16 Striker acquired by Inter this season from Dinamo Bucharest (4)
17 Brazilian forward in last season's relegation squad at Sampdoria (4)

MARCH SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1 Isaksson, 7 Stoke, 8 Fiore, 9 Otero, 10 Addo, 13 Klos, 14 Quinn, 17 Chile, 18 Savio, 19 Numancia.
DOWN: 1 Issa, 2 Anorthosis, 3 Sierra, 4 Ooft, 5 Djetou, 6 Bogdanovic, 11 Okocha, 12 Russia, 15 Dehu, 16 Boca.

MARCH WINNERS

1st prize: Ariel Hunkin, Raanana, Israel.
5 runners-up: Julio Alexander Lozano, Leon, Spain; Ivar Eesmann, Tallinn, Estonia; James Leslie, Newcastle upon Tyne; William Frempong, Uppsala, Sweden; Stewart Coggin, West Sussex.



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Big three bring improvement

AUSTRALIA

AT last, there are signs of genuine progress in the Australian national team.

The importance of Mark Viduka, Harry Kewell and Mark Bosnich to the squad was again underlined when they helped the touring Socceroos to demolish Hungary 3-0.

En route to Budapest, the Australians, minus the UK-based trio, had finished bottom of a quadrangular tournament which also featured the B teams of Chile, Slovakia and Bulgaria.

Only Viduka, of the three big names, made a great impression in Budapest, but their presence in the side always lifts those alongside them, and that was particularly evident in this instance.

Australia's dominance was as comprehensive as the scoreline suggests and the result gives credence to the belief back home that they now have a team of real consequence. Curiously, the three scorers – Stephen Laybutt, man of the match Josip Skoko and Craig Moore – had never previously scored at full international level.

Laybutt, from Parramatta Power, was the sole Australia-based player in the side, while 10 of his team-mates (including two substitutes) are attached to British clubs. Little wonder then that Soccer Australia, the ruling body, are looking into the possibilities of staging 'home' friendly internationals in England.

Newcastle Breakers made a little piece of history by briefly heading the Australian table, the first time they had achieved this feat since joining the National League in 1991. Although they rely largely on young local talent, their three best players this season have been veterans Andy Harper, Bob Catlin and Glenn Sprod.

Harper and Catlin have represented Australia, yet the former is best known these days as a TV pundit and the latter for his stint at Notts County when Australians playing professionally overseas were a rarity. Sprod also experienced English soccer, with Exeter City.

Breakers stayed on top for only 48 hours before Sydney Olympic regained the lead when winning their match in hand, and they subsequently slipped into fourth place, behind Olympic, Wollongong Wolves and Perth Glory. Carlton Blues and Marconi complete the leading six.

Goalscorer...Craig Moore

● Suva are the surprise early leaders in **FIJI** after finishing bottom in 1999 and escaping relegation only through the FA's controversial decision, made during the close season, to expand the top grade from nine clubs to 11.

Suva's revival is due primarily to the recruitment of several leading players, including Ravuamata Madigi and Radike Nawalu, both outstanding in domestic competitions for almost a decade.

The Whites hold a four-point advantage over last season's dominant teams, Ba and Nadi, but the latter have two games in hand.

● Yorkshireman Maurice Tillotson has been appointed coach to the **COOK ISLANDS** national team – currently 182nd in the FIFA rankings.

Tillotson, who was a player with Huddersfield Town and Antwerp, became a New Zealand international and subsequently coached several clubs in that country as well as the national women's team.

When moving to the Cook capital, Rarotonga, Tillotson will find the local scene dominated by the Avatiu club, who recently won their eighth successive domestic title.

Paul Moon

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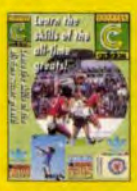

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Brian Glanville's LAST WORD

'To err is human, to forgive divine. And forgiveness is so much easier after a hat-trick'

Don't expect role models

THE STAN COLLYMORE case has thrown a harsh, clear light on the tangled ethics of sport.

In 1998, the wayward striker – an apt enough description – had knocked down and kicked his girlfriend, TV presenter Ulrika Jonsson, in a Parisian bar. His indiscipline was such that this season Aston Villa manager John Gregory wanted no more to do with him, despite the colossal fee – £7million – Villa had paid Liverpool for his services in May 1997.

A period on loan with Fulham had been unproductive. Then bold Martin O'Neill, Leicester City's estimable and well-educated manager, decided to challenge the odds. Collymore arrived at Filbert Street.

But hardly had he done so than he was up to his tricks again in La Manga, where the Leicester team, unfortunately without O'Neill's calming presence, had been sent for a short break in the sun. In the hotel bar – Collymore and bars seem curiously combustible – the forward pursued the image by taking down a fire extinguisher and squirting it around.

Wayward...Stan Collymore

Neither rational nor original, you might say. After all, Ray Parlour, the blond Arsenal right-winger, had done it years ago in a North London pizza parlour (apt, eh?) under the benign eye of his captain, Tony Adams.

O'Neill predictably was most displeased. Collymore went back to England and in the wee small hours he was accused – falsely, he maintains – of being involved in a fracas in – guess where – a hotel bar, where staff, astoundingly, were reluctant to serve drinks at five in the morning.

How long could Leicester, how long could O'Neill, put up with this kind of thing? Perhaps for quite a while, one reflected, after Collymore went out the following Sunday and hit no fewer than three goals for Leicester against Sunderland. To err is human, to forgive divine. And forgiveness is so much easier after a hat-trick.

The word expediency keeps floating into my mind; I'm not sure why. Seldom, after all, does any international or any other pro footballer go quite as far as Alex Villaplane, whose crimes I have chronicled in these pages.

Villaplane was captain of France at the first World Cup, in Uruguay in 1930. During World War Two he joined the villainous *milice*, a collaborationist militia which aided the Nazis in their dirty work. He was guilty of murder, robbery and extortion. He was shot.

There are, of course, less extreme cases. Not least that of Paul Gascoigne, who continued to be picked for England by coach Glenn Hoddle, for a time at least, even though he confessed to beating his wife, severely injuring her.

The behaviour of our professional footballers down the years often has been outrageous; not least because drink has been quintessentially part of the culture.

Today, when callow young men, usually of limited education, are paid such colossal salaries, it seems inevitable that excesses will continue.

In recent times, the likes of Terry Phelan, Carlton Palmer, Michael Gray and Tony Adams have had their problems. The mistake may be to expect too much of such – or any other – sportsmen.

If it is plainly wrong to indulge the varying excesses of such as John McEnroe, on court, Sonny Liston, once a labour 'goon', and the carnivorous rapist Mike Tyson, it is surely unreasonable to expect a sportsman to be a role model. That way sentimentality lies.

Badly treated...Gianfranco Zola

Q but no A

AFTER Chelsea had luckily beaten Marseille at Stamford Bridge, I asked their manager, Gianluca Vialli, what the thinking was behind his substitutions.

Frankly, they had baffled me – Didier Deschamps and Gianfranco Zola had been taken off, leaving one striker and two left-backs. "I'm not going to answer that," replied Vialli. "Why not?" I asked, in some bewilderment. "Because I'm not going to answer your question."

Colleagues flocked around me. What had I done to upset him? One or two thought it must be the question itself, which hardly seemed noxious to me. Others felt there was a hidden agenda.

True, I'd been critical of the way Vialli treated Zola on the occasion of the home match against Tottenham, when he dropped him without forewarning him, and even banished him from the bench. Could it be that? Who knows?

In brief, was his hostile response personal or did it relate directly to the question?

Vialli is a complex man. There are times when he may seem carved from Mount Rushmore; others when, savouring a practical joke, he can dissolve in protracted giggles.

As a manager, I feel the jury is still out. As a player, I have long admired him and was delighted when he decided to put on his boots again. Chelsea could greatly have benefited from his presence on the field this season.

Bari under scrutiny

THE ever-combative Eugenio Fascetti, when rebuked by the relevant Italian minister for his allegedly racist remarks, told her to mind her own business. He also denied that he had racially insulted the unfortunate Djibril Diawara at the end of a torrid match between Bari, where Fascetti is coach, and Torino.

Diawara had had his nose broken by a Bari opponent. In his rage and pain he attacked the wrong player. He was also accused of spitting at him; which seems the chief reason that he incurred a four-match suspension.

Fascetti was quoted as saying that the spit was probably infected and that such people were not wanted in Italian football.

Last season, though there's no reason to believe Fascetti was involved, Bari had a bizarre home win against Venezia, which they were clearly expected to draw. The Brazilian scorer of the winner was abused by his team-mates.

Joe McGinniss states in his excellent book, *The Miracle of Castel Di Sangro*, that Bari won promotion to Serie A by fixing their last game of the 1996-97 season. The author gives impressive evidence to back his claim. For which, as you might expect, he has been ferociously blackguarded.

I still hope his book appears in Italy.

Broken nose...Diawara

Going close...De la Pena (far left) hit a post with his free-kick

De la Pena: a talent ignored

WHEN talent is so thin on the ground nowadays, so thin that David Beckham can be ranked second in the world by credulous coaches, how can so gifted a footballer as Ivan De la Pena be so ludicrously ignored?

This was the question when the Little Buddha went on to the field at Stamford Bridge late in the game for Marseille against Chelsea and proceeded to transform it.

As Marseille manager Bernard Casoni admitted, he improved his team's passing. More than that, he hit an upright with a magnificent, curling, right-footed free-kick which left Ed De Goey standing. At least the keeper had rather more excuse than he had had the previous week, when he stood wide of his near post, enabling Marseille's Robert Pires to score the game's only goal.

When De la Pena emerged with Barcelona a few years ago, he seemed a precious prodigy, capable of great things for both club and country. But injury did not help, nor did the obsessive predilection of the Barça manager, Louis Van Gaal, for his Dutch compatriots.

So the Spaniard went to Lazio, where he was barely used. This season he was on loan from Lazio to Marseille, and an exquisite irony pitted them against one another in Rome the week after he had played at Chelsea.

I wonder where he will be next season.

From the archives...

May 1979

PREVIEWS of the three European club Finals dominated the issue 21 years ago this month, and in particular Nottingham Forest's push for the Champions Cup. Winger John Robertson was pictured on the cover, while, inside, Keir Radnedge profiled manager Brian Clough under the headline 'The man who walks on water'.

"Clough…is far bigger than any of his players," Radnedge wrote, "bigger than even Trevor Francis, the record £1.15million buy from Birmingham in February who is likely to make his first appearance in European competition in Munich." The prediction was accurate – and Francis scored the Final's only goal.

Koln, beaten by Forest in the semi-finals, were one of five West German clubs to reach the last four of European competition that year, equalling the record set by English clubs in 1965-66.

Other records were being set. In Argentina, Gimnasia y Esgrima forward Seppaquercia scored from 54 yards five seconds into a game against Huracan; in Italy, Lazio substitute Paolo Ammoniaci was sent off against Roma before play had even restarted after he had come on.

According to Brian Glanville, Ammoniaci "ran on to the field, hurled himself over [Roma midfielder] Boni's leg, and was instantly sent off by the referee for simulating a foul."

Elsewhere in the issue, Hans John Maier was making the claim that Corinthians supporters were the world's best. "The team have not won a championship in 25 years but whoever heard of 5,000 fans taking a 51-hour bus trip over 2,000 miles to see their team in a championship quarter-final?"

You would hope that the game they saw was better than the Ipswich v Barcelona Cup-winners Cup tie witnessed by Leslie Vernon. "We were looking forward to a feast of attacking football from both sides. I should have known better!… [Barcelona forward] Krankl could have been eating a Wiener schnitzel in the club restaurant for all he did on the pitch in the first half."

There was news that Johan Cruyff's appetite for the game had finally been revived, following his announcement that he would never return to competitive soccer. Four days of talks led to him signing a £500,000 one-year contract with New York Cosmos.

Also making merry in North America was FIFA honorary president Sir Stanley Rous, sporting an American Indian head-dress presented to him after he accepted membership of Canada's Provinces Referees' Association.

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